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SPIRITUAL HONEY

FROM

NATURAL HIVES;

OR,

Meditations and Observations

ON THE

NATURAL HISTORY AND HABITS OF BEES.

FIRST INTRODUCED TO PUBLIC NOTICE IN 1657,

DISCARDED
By SAMUEL PURCHAS, A.M.

LONDON:

SAMUEL BAGSTER,

PATERNOSTER ROW; OR, VERE STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE;

AND

WILLIAM PICKERING, CHANCERY LANE.

212347

London: Printed by S. Bagster, Jun., 14, Bartholomew Close.

PREFACE.

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Most things afford a fund from which an inquisitive mind, when rightly directed, may gain something. But the Christian's affections will naturally be led, in the contemplation of created objects, to the adoration of the Almighty Creator, which is a work to be commenced in time, and perfected in eternity ; and while the striking injunction of Solomon, " Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise," remains unblotted from the Sacred Scriptures, it is unquestionably a duty to make the perishable creatures around us contribute to our moral elevation. To do this with the greatest profit requires that we should pay attention to their peculiar instincts ; and the more deeply the student digs into the exhaust-

less mine of the works of God, the more amply will he be repaid by a high tone of reverential feeling, and an enjoyment both of spiritual and natural acquirements.

In the course of my reading, I purchased many works on the habits and economy of the Bee, in one of which I found the collection of Theological Meditations and Observations, which is now presented to the lovers of natural wonders. The title of the work runs thus:—"A Theatre of politicall flying insects, wherein especially the nature, the worth, the work, the wonder, and the manner of right-ordering of the Bee, is discovered and described. Together with discourses historical, and observations physical, concerning them. And in a second part are annexed meditations and observations theological and moral, in three centuries, upon that subject." By Samuel Purchas, M. A., and Pastor at Sutton, in Essex. 1657.

These centuries, in the common acceptation of the term, may, at first sight, be supposed to be the periods when the meditations were originally written; such, however, is not the fact; the word century applies here to the *number* of the meditations. In the original

there were three hundred, but those principally struck my attention which, by the simplicity of their similes and their quaint style, caused *scripture sweets* to drop on the mind : I determined, therefore, to reject all those which merely alluded to politics, for the reasons I gave in the preface to my work on Bees. The remainder are pure as Mr. Purchas published them, only that a text of Scripture has been added to each as a motto.

Another improvement has been adopted to remove the stiff appearance of lengthened quotations : in the original the names of most of the authors were subjoined, but in this edition they have been struck out, their retention not being deemed necessary.

The selection of these meditations was evidently the result of a long course of laborious reading ; I therefore draw the conclusion that they were collected by the Rev. Samuel Purchas, who published a most elaborate work between the years 1613 and 1625, and who, very probably being straitened in his means, left these papers to his son, who followed in his father's footsteps, by devoting himself ardently to literature and parochial duties. To allow my readers

to judge for themselves, I subjoin the life of the father.

Such, my readers, are the causes which brought this interesting work before your notice: pardon me if I extract from my other preface the reasons which induced me to appear before the world at all; and if I should prove a help to the mere naturalist to lead him to his God—or a guide to the Christian to point him to a new source whence he may draw materials for contemplation, my volumes will not be waste paper, nor my aim prove to have been wrongly directed.

“ From general study, the mind gradually concentrates its energies to one object; and I found myself most interested in Bees. During my researches into the modes of management suggested and worked by different individuals, I was struck with the disregard shown to the habits and instincts of these insects, and the causes of failure, which might be attributed rather to *inefficient* sources of instruction than any thing else; when my attention was drawn to Mr. Nutt’s hives, and his *new mode* of ventilation.

“ I read the chief of the old authors, and

having heard many of their systems made the subject of conversation, the idea struck me that a small volume, comprising a succinct account of each real or fancied improvement, with a few practical remarks, deduced from the natural history and propensities of the bee, might prevent many persons from commencing bee-keeping by imperfect methods, and thus avoid much disappointment. A clear exposition of errors generally leads to improved practice.

“The translator of Huber, when he wrote his preface to the work of that indefatigable naturalist on bees, felt as I do; for he says, ‘The cultivation of bees forms a branch of rural economy which may be carried to a very great extent. It is greatly to be regretted, that there is no general treatise embodying all the facts already ascertained from undoubted observations. This would form a guide to those who would enter upon it as an object of importance, because the real utility to which all animals may ultimately be converted, depends solely on an intimate acquaintance with their nature.’

“Where possible, an apiarian’s own description of his hive has been preferred, rather than run

the risk of inadvertently misrepresenting his system. I have paid little regard to dates in my work ; but have endeavoured to present hives and practice in the order in which I conceive they demanded attention. Having already avowed my intention in writing this preface, I need not cloak the fact, that, by describing my Ladies' Safety Hive last, I consider it to be that which claims notice for the ease with which the following desiderata in bee-management may be embraced, viz.—cool store-room—prevention of swarming—easy method of taking honey—promotion of swarming when wished—perfect inspection of the whole hive—protection from wet in the open air—and a method of feeding in the severest weather without exposure to cold.”

SAMUEL BAGSTER, JUN.

14, *Bartholomew Close, London.*

EXTRACT

FROM THE

ORIGINAL DEDICATORY EPISTLE

*To the Right Honourable, truly noble, and religious
Lord, Robert, Earl of Warwick, Baron of
Leez, &c.*

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

THE creatures are the book of nature, as said Anthony the hermit, who being demanded by a philosopher, how he could possibly spend his time in the wilderness, seeing he was destitute of books ; answered, My book, O philosopher, is the nature of all things created by God, which, when I please, I can peruse and read. The world is God's library, God manifested and drawn out ; and all the

creatures are as glasses, in which we may see, and as scaffolds and ladders, by which we may ascend and draw nearer to him : for God is a light too strong for our sense, therefore we must (with him in the story) look for the sun in the west, not in the east ; behold the Lord as he is reflected and refracted, first in the glass of his creatures and his works ; and then, secondly, in the face of his dearest Son.

God, in the school of nature, useth a method so suitable and correspondent to our dulness, that our meditations should not want in the creatures volumes (I may say) wherein to read most excellent admonitions and instructions : in every creature are they engraven in ordinary characters, and in a lesser print ; as in the Scriptures, they be written in capital letters once, the creatures are as a bright glass, wherein we may behold our God ; for as God is a glass in heaven, wherein all his creatures are seen, so are the crea-

tures a glass upon earth, wherein we may behold and know our God. They are trumpets of his honour—witnesses of his worth—bellows of our love—spurs to our dulness—and judges of our unthankfulness.

There is some good in all creatures,—the meanest hath a beam of God's majesty; yet some have more than others, the bees more than (almost) any. That a little neglected creature should be so curious in architecture, and in the fabric of her hexangle combs should observe as just proportions as the best geometrician, we should suspect for an untruth, if we saw it not daily practised by them.

Nicostratus in *Ælian*, finding a curious piece of wood, and being wondered at by one, and asked what pleasure he could take to stand as he did still gazing on the picture? answered, Hadst thou mine eyes, my friend, thou wouldest not wonder, but rather be ravished as I am at the

inimitable art of this rare and admirable piece. I am sure no picture can express so much wonder and excellency as the smallest insect: but we want Nicostratus his eyes to behold them.

And the praise of God's wisdom and power lies asleep and dead in every creature, until man actuate and enliven it. I cannot, therefore, altogether conceive it unworthy of the greatest mortals to contemplate the miracles of nature, and that as they are more visible in the smallest and almost contemptible creatures, for there most lively do they express the infinite power and wisdom of the great Creator, and erect and draw the minds of the most intelligent to the first and prime Cause of all things, teaching them as the power, so the presence of the Deity in the smallest insects.

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR'S FATHER.

SAMUEL PURCHAS, a learned English divine, and compiler of a valuable collection of voyages, was born at Thaxted in Essex in 1577, and educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he took his master's degree in 1600, and afterwards that of bachelor of divinity. In 1604 he was instituted to the vicarage of Eastwood in Essex; but leaving the cure of it to his brother, went and lived in London, the better to carry on the great work he had undertaken.

He published the first volume in 1613, and the fifth in 1625, under this title, "Purchas his Pilgrimage, or Relations of the World, and

the Religions observed in all Ages and Places discovered from the Creation unto this present." In 1615 he was incorporated at Oxford, as he stood at Cambridge, bachelor of divinity; and a little before, had been collated to the rectory of St. Martin's, Ludgate, in London. He was chaplain to Abbott, Archbishop of Canterbury, and had also the promise of a deanery from Charles I., which he did not live to enjoy.

It has been said that by the publishing of his books he brought himself into debt, and that he died in prison. This last is certainly untrue, as he died in his own house in 1628. It is not improbable that he might be a sufferer by the expenses of printing his books, but his debts are to be referred to a more honourable cause,—the kindness of his disposition. In 1618 his brother-in-law, William Pridmore, died, and left to him the care of the widow and her family; and in the same year his brother, Daniel Purchas, died, who likewise left four orphan and helpless children, and the arrange-

ment of his affairs, to our author, who says, in his quaint way, that this brother's "intangled booke-estate perplexed me in a new kind of bookishness, with heterogean toil of body, and unacquainted vexations of mind, to pay manifold debts," &c. These circumstances may account for the embarrassment of this good and pious man (for such he was); and in addition to his other afflictions, he mentions the death of his mother and of a beloved daughter, in 1619.

His pilgrimages, and the learned Hackluyt's Voyages, led the way to all other collections of that kind, and have been justly valued and esteemed. Boissard, a learned foreigner, has given a great character of Purchas: he styles him "a man exquisitely skilled in languages, and all arts divine and human; a very great philosopher, historian, and divine; a faithful presbyter of the church of England; very famous for many excellent writings, and especially for his vast volumes of the East and

West Indies, written in his native tongue." His other works are, "Purchas his Pilgrim, or Microcosmos, or The Historie of Man," 1627, 8vo., a series of meditations upon man at all ages and in all stations, founded on Psalm xxxix. 5. In the address to the reader are a few particulars of himself and family, which we have extracted. He published also "The King's Tower and Triumphal Arch of London," 1623, 8vo.; and a Funeral Sermon on Psalm xxx. 5," is attributed to him, if it be not mistaken for the Microcosmos. His son Samuel published "A Theatre of Political Flying Insects," 1657, 4to. His Voyages now sell at a vast price.

SPIRITUAL HONEY

FROM

NATURAL HIVES.

“ THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY.”

ISA. vi. 3.

THERE is no creature but may teach a good soul one step towards his Creator. We ought therefore to make a spiritual use of things natural, and the things of this present life, by them raising up our minds to heavenly meditations, and in an holy alchemy (as one saith) draw gold out of lead, heaven out of earth, grace out of nature. The world is a glass, wherein we may contemplate the eternal power and majesty of God ; for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. (Rom. i. 20.) It is that great book of so large a character, that a man may run and read it ; yea, even the simplest man that cannot read, may yet spell out of this

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book that there is a God. Every shepherd hath this calendar and every ploughman this A, B, C. What the French poet divinely sung, is thus as sweetly Englished,

The world's a school, where, in a general story,
God always reads dumb lectures of his glory.

A shame, therefore, for us to have earthly hearts void of spiritual meditation, when every creature every where yields us matter enough. All of us can use the creatures carnally, and so can beasts ; the spiritual use is rare.

“ THAT WHICH I SEE NOT, TEACH THOU ME.”

JOB xxxiv. 32.

God humbles us with ignorance in many things, not only divine, but natural and in common use ; as in the loadstone's drawing of iron. In the nature of bees how blind are we, notwithstanding all our observation and labour !—in the production and continuance of the queen bee, in the generation of other bees, and generally in the forms of all things—a just punishment of our pride, in affecting and aspiring to knowledge too high for us. And if there be in nature such secrets, what then in grace ? Let us not be too curious in prying into God's ark, lest we smart like the fly fluttering about the candle ; for God is a consuming fire to those that will be sporting themselves in the quirks of their wit about his sacred mysteries. Let us wait

till the life to come, and the veil shall be taken from our eyes ; in the mean time, humble ignorance is better than proud curiosity.

“ YE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.”—GAL. iii. 28.

Many have troubled themselves and others to discover the several kinds of working bees ; whereas of working bees, in these parts of the world, there is but one sort. And all bees agree, if not in a just magnitude, colour, and proportion, yet certainly in their operations, natural dispositions, and inclinations ; so that our bees, and bees in Spain and other parts, make all their combs with hexangle-like cells, and are all industrious to gather honey, although, in some parts, according to the climate, they are more retarded from working than in others.

And all the saints that are dispersed throughout the whole world have the same nature in them, although there be external differences ; they have the same spirit in them, though they be never so remote one from another, and never saw one another’s face, yet may they know one another’s mind, for one mind dwells in them ; and when one mind dwells in diverse, they be of the same disposition ; one nature is common to them all.

“ FOR THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD ARE WISER IN THEIR GENERATION THAN THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT.”—LUKE xvi. 18.

Wasps labour not as the bees to furnish them-

selves with provision for the future, but for the most part live on spoil and rapine; and about this are as indefatigably diligent and earnest, early and late, as the careful bees in their profitable labours. So it is with many in the state, who in unlawful callings, and in the maintenance of their unlawful trades, do take as much pains, nay more, than some in lawful. Demetrius his example shews it Acts xix.; and the proverb is, “The belly hath no ears.”

“ THE LORD IS FAR FROM THE WICKED.”

PROV. xv. 29.

Many creatures have retiring places; the bees when winter, night, or storms approach, they have their hives or dwellings in trees; they have their hiding places. But a wicked, careless man, that hath not acquainted himself with God, when troubles come he hath no hiding place, nor any abiding place, but lies open to the storm of God’s displeasure; therefore he is surprised with fears and cares, and pulled in pieces with distractions: he is a meteor that hangs in the clouds, he cannot tell which way he shall fall.

“ THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL HOLD ON HIS WAY.”

JOB xvii. 9.

Bees are laborious and industrious in their youth, and yet dispense not with themselves to be idle in their age; but as their skill is increased by daily practice, so do they with incessant diligence follow

their business, and that in the most difficult and laborious tasks, being more early at their work than the younger; and in chilling airs, when they dare not venture forth, will they be abroad: nay, when they are weak, and have overspent bodies and ragged wings, yet will they be abroad, although they miscarry in their labours. How different is the practice of the men of the world, where a new broom sweeps clean! Their first beginnings are goodly and glorious, but the end is not answerable. Many are hot professors, and zealous in their younger years, but grow key-cold in their elder years: therefore Eccles. vii., “ The end is better than the beginning.” This deceitfulness of men is also in their special callings: many good magistrates at the first, as Saul, and ministers, as Judas; but they are best at first, like Nebuchadnezzar’s image, a golden head, and iron and clayey feet.

“ THEY ARE GONE FAR FROM ME, AND HAVE WALKED
AFTER VANITY, AND ARE BECOME VAIN.”

JER. ii. 5.

If a man did find an all-sufficiency in God, he would never turn from him nor seek to the creature; even as the bee, if it did find honey enough in one flower would not hasten to another; but because it doth not, it goes from flower to flower. And so is the nature of man as Solomon expresseth it, saying, “ that he hastened to outward things;” that is, when he fell upon one he found not enough

in it, he made haste to another and to another. So the nature of man, if it did find sweetness and comfort and contentment enough in God, it would not turn from him to the creature; but because in his sense the object is too narrow, there is somewhat he would have more—he looks over the palings, as it were, he seeth something he desireth, and that causeth him to step out.

“ **YE THAT LOVE THE LORD, HATE EVIL.**”

Ps. xcvi. 10.

Bees will endure wasps abroad or in other hives, but never willingly in their own, for antipathy is a perpetual enmity. If the force of antipathy prevail so far to make an irreconcilable hatred, as great should be our hatred against sinners and God’s dis-honour. It is fearful when we can easily comport with the wicked and digest their company and conversation.

“ **A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST.**”—2 TIM. ii. 3.

Bees, when they are weary of the drones, having no further use of them, and fearing prejudice and future want by their gormandizing, at first show their dislike by molesting and troubling of them; but when this will not cause them to depart nor yet give over their wonted courses, then with courage and confidence do they set upon them, confront, kill, and slay them;—teaching Christians according to their places, that it is not enough to dislike

the doings and practices of the wicked, but they must, having reproved them, confront and oppose them, nay strive, contend, and war with them. Many faintly and coldly show their dislike against wicked men ; as Eli against his wicked sons. But this is (to use Sophocles his comparison) as if in a festered wound or sore, the chirurgeon should only blow upon it with his mouth ; whereas, there must be cutting, lancing, searching, burning, and the greatest violence that can be. Asa was herein famous for not enduring his own mother in her idolatry. 2 Cor. xv. xvi.

“ THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS.”

PHILLIP. iii. 10.

If the queen bee in a swarm, following after the company, (but because of the weakness of her wings or tenderness of her constitution, having been never abroad before, and so not able to endure the cooler air), fall down, they that be her present attendants and saw her fall, stoop with her, encircle her, and if she rise not and return to the hive, or go to the main body of the swarm, (settled perhaps a little distance with longing and trembling expectation of her presence) stay with her, and starve with her, rather than forsake her, contenting themselves with the condition of their leader. And shall afflictions be the way that the Master enters into glory and the members find fault with him ? shall the head be crowned with thorns and the members

wrapped in softness ? This is an unhandsome indecency, and a disunion too near an antipathy. Whoever would be Christ's disciple must take up his cross, deny himself his own fonder appetites, and trace his Master's footsteps, though marked out with blood that he shed for our redemption ; for he that will save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose it shall save it to eternity.

“ LOVE NOT THE WORLD.”—1 JOHN ii. 15.

Bees for the most part feed on honey, which over-liberally eaten turns to choler ; no wonder then if they be fiery, furious, and choleric creatures. There is a power in meats to assimilate those that eat them ; what we feed on we are oft like unto. Feed on gross meats, your spirits will be more gross and dull—feed on light meats, your spirits will be more quick and agile : so if a man feeds on the world he can relish nothing but the world ; his spirit is made carnal, and stupid, and worldly, and can rise no higher : therefore, when Solomon gave himself to seek pleasures to try what was in them, though he did not neglect wisdom, as Eccles. i. 8. yet he found by experience, deal as wisely as he could, in the end they did so stupify him, that he was led away by them to idolatry. Then is a man become stupid when he is serious about trifles, and trifling about serious things. By pursuit of these, his judgment was quick in earthly matters, but in matters of religion he began to grow very weak and

ignorant; how much more, then, they that wholly give themselves to the lusts and pleasures of the world !

“ KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD, THROUGH FAITH UNTO SALVATION.”—1 PETER i. 5.

Bees, in violent frosts, are torpid and stir not, especially in the northern regions; where they are almost all winter, if not in a dead, yet a very deep sleep; but the mighty power of God, in the return of the spring, revives and quickens them. And it is not a less almighty power that keeps the life of grace in the greatest falls and temptations of the saints, that keeps life in David and Peter that it should quicken and revive again, when the sun of righteousness, with comforting beams, refresheth and warmeth them.

“ ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL UNTO ME, BUT ALL THINGS ARE NOT EXPEDIENT.”—1 COR. vi. 12.

Bees are patient and harmless creatures, and seldom, unprovoked, prove injurious; but he that shall often stand before the hives in the heat of the day when they return home with their labours, may too late repent his temerity and fool-hardiness. Lawful liberty used to the full, is exceedingly dangerous: he that will take all the liberty he may, will sometimes take that he may not. It is not safe at all times to go into the high-priest's hall. We are often mistaken in our judgments concerning the

lawfulness or unlawfulness of actions: he that will do all that he thinks he may lawfully do, if he increase in giving himself liberty, will quickly arrive at doing things unlawful. He that, because a man may be innocently angry, will never refrain his passion, in a little time will be intemperate in his anger, and mistake both his object and the degree. Thus facetiousness and urbanity entertained with an open hand, will turn into jestings that are uncomely. If you will be secure, remove your tent, dwell further off—God hath given us much liberty *safely* to use it, unless we watch unto prayer.

“ THEY THAT ARE AFTER THE FLESH, DO MIND THE THINGS OF THE FLESH; BUT THEY THAT ARE AFTER THE SPIRIT, THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT.”
—ROM. viii. 5.

Let bees be kept close and imprisoned in their hives, though they have ease and air in abundance, yet they will not be contented, but still complain and murmur; gnawing and eating away the stopping and impediments, that they may apply themselves to their natural and delightful labours: so a river, let it be dammed and stopped up, yet as the course of it is naturally to go downwards, at length it will overbear the dam and run over. Let water that is sweet be made brackish by the overflowing of salt water, yet, because naturally it is sweet, it will in time work out the saltiness. Here we have a picture of every man’s nature—

look at the constant stream of his disposition, that which is natural to him; though he may be pent up and hindered from the practice of it for a time, yet will he break through all impediments that he may be at it, though some temptations may forcibly break in and bar and stop up for a time his walking heaven-ward, yet will he never be at rest until they are removed, and he has got into his former course again; whereas, if a wicked man step into a good course by some trial or good education, &c., yet long he will not hold in it; he will break through the impediment, because his natural disposition, the stream of his heart, runs another way.

“ MINE EYES ARE UNTO THEE, O GOD THE LORD;
IN THEE IS MY TRUST.”—Ps. cxli. 8.

Bees will not be without a leader, for in all they act they receive directions from the queen bee. As the governor of a ship he hath his hand sometimes to the steerage and his eye to the pole star, to be directed by that, so is the life of a Christian; he must always be doing that which God prescribes him, and he must have his eye to the star to be guided in his course by God’s direction: he that doth not this, knows not what it is to trust in God.

“ FELIX TREMBLED.”—ACTS xxiv. 25.

As the bear does hardly intermeddle with his desired honey, for fear of the stinging of the bees, so some men dare not commit sin, for fear either of the

laws of men, or in slavish fear of hell, or the prologue to it, terror of conscience ; yet hugs it in his heart, embraceth it in the arms of his affection, suffers it to reign in his heart, and to take up his thoughts as by a commission, continually contemplating thereon.

“ THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.”—ROM. vi. 23.

The drones labour not, but altogether intend their pastime and recreation, and then return into the hive and fill themselves with the purest honey, whereby they quickly grow foggy, and either cannot when they go forth return into the hive, and so perish abroad, or after a while are ejected or slain by the bees. And such sporting drones the world is full of, who plunge themselves over head and ears in courses of pleasure, wherein they unworthily waste the fat and marrow of dear and precious time, the flower of their age, the strength of their bodies, emasculate and melt the vigour of their spirits into effeminate sensuality and lust, drown the fair and goodly hopes of their education, the improvement of their parts in froth and folly, as though they were placed upon earth, as leviathan in the sea, only to take their sport and pastime therein. Lovers they are of pleasure, and having their fool’s paradise here, must, therefore, in the equity of a just and holy proportion with the rich man, look for their payment and torment hereafter.

“ THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS
SHOULDER.”—ISA. ix. 6.

Bees will not continue well nor long without a leader, nor will they endure divers or more than one. Therefore in the union of swarms, and in castlings, where sometimes many go forth, yet will the bees dethrone and destroy all but one; and until it be effected are in a discontented tumult and hurly burly, yea often in a civil war; and if it fall out the parts to be somewhat equal, thereby is occasioned (sometimes) a total ruin and destruction. For look how far any thing goes from unity, so near it comes to perishing—and any the more peace and unity the more safety and security. And if, in the little compass of a hive, there is such need of a governor and unity, much more in the great hive of the world. And this governor must needs be God; for by men or angels it cannot be governed. The preservation of every thing is in the unity of it; and therefore you see any thing that is divided, that division is the dissolution of it, as when the soul is divided from the body, and when the body is divided from itself, so likewise in a family or commonwealth, much more in the world. If there were not a fountain there would be different streams, and if there were diverse principles of things there would be a swerving and division in the nature and order of things; and so not an unity, and so by consequence it would be the destruction of the

whole. Of necessity, therefore, there must be a governor, and this governor must be one, and that one is God, who guides every creature under the sun, even the smallest of the creatures ; and orders and directs them to their several ends and businesses to which he hath appointed.

“ UNITE MY HEART TO FEAR THY NAME.”

Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

Bees, being little and light creatures, are much agitated and disturbed with tempestuous and stormy winds, which, because they cannot altogether prevent, they, by a natural sagacity and providence, do arm and enable themselves against them. The bees of Candia (as it is reported) poise themselves with small pebbles which they carry in their feet ; but our bees, to help themselves, fly very low near to the surface of the earth, and for the most part under the lee-side of a hedge, whereby the violence of the wind is much checked and broken. For as a ship that is well furnished with tackle and sails, that may give the motion and advance the swiftness of it, yet if it hath not ballast in it, or weight in it to make it go steady, or a lee-shore, where (by the height of the banks) the violence of the wind is somewhat broken, it is up and down tossed always, and the more sails the more danger and hazard. So Christians, in their voyage to the new Jerusalem, must not only have the wings of love, but the ballast of fear descending in a low flight to make them

go steady. We must not have love only, but fear (whereby we fly low), lest otherwise we move but wantonly; skipping and dancing by fits and by spurts in good ways, and keep not any constant course in our holy voyage. The eminency and excellency, the security and safety of a Christian conversation, ariseth from a mixture of fear and love; for as the purest white and fairest red mixed together make the beauty of the face in the body, so the mixture of fear and love make the beauty of the affection in the soul—fear mixed with love, for it must not go alone. Fear, though it be apt to make us careful and cautious—careful how to please God; and cautious—fearful to offend him; yet if it be alone will precipitate us into despair, or into the forlorn hope. It must be tempered, therefore, with love, that we look not only upon the greatness, but on the goodness and sweetness of God; that as we are affected with the prospect of the one, *viz.*, his greatness, with an affection of holy, humble fear, and lowly awe and reverence of him, so that that may not beat us down and overthrow us by despair, we must keep up (advanced by the wings of love) looking upon his sweetness and his goodness. If we think on nothing but love—fix our eyes on nothing but goodness and sweetness in God, we shall be ready to charge our sins on his back in our presumption of his goodness, building on his mercy inordinately, and so presume to do any thing. I say, love alone would be too wanton except it were

poised and balanced with a holy fear, and awe, and reverence of God.

“ I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”
—PHILLIP. iii 14.

If a swarm be checked and stunted with bad weather presently after it is hived, or if it be small, or very late in the year, the bees will be carelessly desperate and gather nothing to purpose, for they are out of hope to get enough for their winter’s provision and maintenance, and as good never a whit as never the better. God is the loadstone of all endeavours: a man will not labour for nothing, therefore despair kills a man’s labours, and plucks up the root of all his endeavours; if there be any good present, hope makes us labour to increase it; if there be any good to come, hope labours to attain it; but good there must be, at least in hope and expectation, or else all endeavours will flag and wither away to nothing.

“ FERVENT IN SPIRIT, SERVING THE LORD.”
ROM. xii. 11.

The field wherein bees feed is not a whit barer for their biting: when they have taken their full repast of flowers or grass, the ox may feed on the sheep fat on their reversions. The reason is, because those little chemists distil only the refined part of the flower, leaving the grosser substance thereof. So ejacula-

tions bind not men to any bodily observance, only busy the spiritual half, which maketh consistent with the prosecution of any other employment.

“ WHEN THOU DOEST ALMS, LET NOT THY RIGHT HAND KNOW WHAT THY LEFT HAND DOETH.”—
MATT. vi. 3.

Many, observing the bees flying into their hive, suppose them best furnished that they see go home laden on their thighs, and think the other idle that they see carry nothing ; whereas though the former be well busied, yet oftentimes the other are better who are more deeply, more richly laden, being full freighted with honey. God’s servants, in this life, are more in substance than in shew : when they fast they disfigure not their faces ; and when they give alms they let not their right hand know what their left hand doth. Good actions are not always rewarded here, and therefore in vain do men muster and set them out upon beadrolls in this life. Labour to get the approbation of God, and so do good that thy conscience may be well stored in God’s sight ; who “ seeing thee in secret may reward thee openly, and make thy light shine clear as the perfect day.” The wise virgins have their oil in their vessels, that is, have their holiness and beauty hidden, and their actions only to be taken notice of by God.

“ TAKE HEED THAT NO MAN DECEIVE YOU.”
MATT. xxiv. 4.

Bees, if they be not disturbed or provoked, are

seldom troublesome or offensive, especially in a remote distance from their hives ; but, molest or disquiet them at home, then they will furiously invade you, and admit of no terms of peace, but die or prevail in the ruin of that man or creature that offends them. There are many men in the world that seem of excellent natures, quiet spirits, while they are not stirred or moved ; but if they be once provoked, the latent embers be uncovered, then they are implacably mischievous.

“ O LORD GOD OF HOSTS, CAUSE THY FACE TO SHINE, AND WE SHALL BE SAVED.”—Ps. lxxx. 19.

Bees, if they fall into the water and be drowned, or be chilled and dead with cold (if it be less than the space of a day), if you lay them in the warm sun, or bring them near a fire, they will recover life, and revive again, and do well. The affections of God’s children are apt to grow dull and languish, if not to be chilled, by earthly objects; for our heart is ponderous, “ *Multum trahit de terra, de carne multum*,”—it weighs downward as the weights of a clock move downward continually; and if they be once at the ground the clock is silent: they must be pulled up again every twelve hours, or in such a certain compass they must be wound up. And so in this case, there must be courses of winding up holy affections; if the fire be gone, the fire be out, revive it, kindle it again from heaven, reinforce, chafe, and warm yourselves by the fire of prayer and other holy duties. When the fire on the altar

was extinguished, it was unlawful to have it kindled save only by that from heaven. It must be the fire of heaven, not any other fire, that must revive us. We must oft be renewing of our holy affections to keep them vigorous and lively. We must frequently excite and stir up ourselves; when we begin to faint we must rub and chafe our affections, and especially spread our chilled spirits before the Sun of Righteousness, that he may, with the heat and healing of his wings, revive and quicken us.

“ IT IS SOWN A NATURAL BODY ; IT IS RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY.”—1 COR. xv. 44.

The little worm, after a short life of a few weeks, stirs no more, feeds no more, but lies apparently dead and entombed in the cell wherein it was bred ; but wait with patience a score of days and you shall see it revive, and appear a far more noble creature than it was before. What is this but an emblem of the resurrection ? Aaron’s rod, which was a dry and withered stick, in one night buds and blossoms and brings forth ripe almonds. To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven—a time to die and a time to rise again.

“ IT IS GOD WHICH WORKETH IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE.”

PHIL. ii. 13.

Bees can with ease and facility dart in their stings ; but they have no power to extract or draw

them out again ; hurt they can—help or ease they cannot. We are all naturally wise to do evil, but to do good we have no understanding. We are all as spring-locks, shut we can of ourselves but not open, for our natural powers (as the schools speak) are become *naturales impotentiæ*. And howsoever the sword of the Lord and the sword of Gideon may go together, yet the hand of Gideon, or the sword in his hand, or the edge on his sword, is not able to pierce, unless God give power ; “ *Non enim tam agimus quam a Deo agimur*,” saith Zanchy : for man is not so properly said to do good, as to be led to do it by the good Spirit of God.

“ FOR THE PEOPLE TURNETH NOT TO HIM THAT SMITETH THEM, NEITHER DO THEY SEEK THE LORD OF HOSTS.”—ISA. ix. 13.

Plundering bees will desperately adventure to spoil and rob their neighbours ; but if they find sentinels before the ports to question them, and a strong guard at the gates to oppose them, and when they have with danger and difficulty passed through these, numerous forces within stoutly charging the first assailants with their ruin and destruction,—the survivors will be weary and wary, doubtful and fearful further to prosecute their treacherous designs. For even naturally all brute creatures avoid that place where they are sensible by a token that their fellows have miscarried. But how great the neglect of God’s judgments among men ! perhaps on the first

impression they are deeply affected with them; but yet as a pang it is quickly overpast—and as news it soon grows out of date. Pharaoh was no sooner quitted from one plague, but presently his heart was hardened to draw on another. The Israelites that were so affected, flighted, and frightened at the horrible end of Corah and his accomplices, even on the morrow fall on Moses and Aaron and upbraid them for the loss of the people of God. Many look on others' judgments as if themselves were furnished with a supersedeas from all arrests, and argue from their punishment how they have deserved, without the least reflex upon their own mutable condition.

“ THY WORD HAVE I HID IN MY HEART.”

Ps. cxix. 11.

As bees are industrious to gather, so what they diligently get they do not carelessly and at random disperse about the hive; but discreetly and orderly, beginning at the top and so downwards, dispose it in their waxen cabinets, and as soon as they be full of honey close them fast with a waxen covering, both to prevent robbers, and also to necessitate themselves to further labour as long as the season of gathering continues. Many hear, but the word heard profits them not, because they are careless to treasure up the truths delivered,—they quickly forget; such are like unto a man who beholds his natural face in a glass, and goeth his way, and for-

getteth what manner of man he was. But would we thrive under the means, we must, when we have heard, and marked, and understood the truth of duties delivered, lay them up, lock them closely and safely in our hearts, as in a safe repository ; we must commit good instructions to memory. Had we rich treasures we would not lay them up negligently, but keep them under locks and keys, bars and bolts ; why then should we let holy instructions slip out of our memories, whereby all former labours, as of the speaker, so of the hearer, is utterly frustrate ?

“ INCLINE YOUR EAR AND COME UNTO ME : HEAR, AND YOUR SOUL SHALL LIVE.”—ISA. lv. 3.

If the bee lights upon a flower where there is no honey (being wasted or gathered before), she quickly gets off and flies away to another that will furnish her. Let us not lose ourselves and forget our errand ; our father Adam lost our happiness, and we are sent to seek it : seek it where it is, and go handsomely to work ; say, I am not made for riches, they are made for me ; I am not made for creatures, they are made for me, and I am their master ; therefore these cannot make me happy : I am made for eternity, for everlasting life and happiness. Therefore let me study that—mind that—see that end beyond inferior ends. Why do men seek wealth, but to be happy ? Why pleasures, why honours, but because they would be happy ? If these

cannot bless and unhappy me, why should I burn day-light? why should I not off them, as the bee gets off the plants that yield her no honey, and once at last see where my business lies, in pursuing happiness, and where my happiness lies, in God's ways; the first step whereof is poverty of spirit.

“YIELD YOURSELVES UNTO GOD.”—ROM. vi. 13.

When the wax is mollified and wrought warm then set the seal on it, for it will receive the impression. And when God hath any ways mollified our hearts, and made them in a mourning case, close with him; when we find ourselves any whit softened—take the hint—improve that opportunity.

“FOLLOW AFTER MEEKNESS. FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH.”—1 TIM. vi. 11, 12.

Bees are naturally harmless and patient creatures; each, in and for her own particular, will ordinarily receive any prejudice, hurt, or molestation, and when they suffer are wondrous calm; but near the hive, where the cause seems to be public, and their commonwealth to be endangered, then they are marvellous hot and furious; and, notwithstanding the fiercest opposition, will resolutely charge all that stand in their way in the defence of the public, although they die in the conflict. But how far short are many Christians in their practices! In any public cause where the glory of God is concerned, or the common good interested, you shall have them

bear all quietly. Oh, saith one, you must have patience, and bear with small matters ; but in a cause that toucheth his own particular (say himself be concerned in his penny—in his peace—in his reputation—or the like) then none are so fiery, none so furious ; he is all upon a flame ; then no penalty is thought too great, no disgrace too heavy for such a person that hath done him displeasure. Whereas a meek Christian in his own cause will be meek and silent, but in God's cause zealous and earnest. See it in Moses when he was censured, disparaged, reviled, he bears it quietly, pockets it up without distemper ; but at another time, when the cause was public, when it concerned the glory of God and the good of the church, then none so zealous, none so fiery as Moses : he cannot brook nor bear.

“ THE LORD LOVETH THE GATES OF ZION MORE
THAN ALL THE DWELLINGS OF JACOB.”

Ps. lxxxvii. 2.

Bees in July extract honey out of many and various flowers, but yet by little and little, and in a small proportion ; but if a honey-dew falls then, in a short space are they largely replenished, and have a triplication of their sweets, and a full refection with their nectar. Holy prayers, meditations, and intercourse with God, private readings, soul-soliloquies, and spiritual discourses, are entertainers and satisfiers of the saints' necessities, but in public solemnities God opens his treasures, pours out his graces

more abundantly. Private devotions and secret offices of religion are like refreshings of a garden with the distilling and petty drops of a watering-pot; but addresses to the temple, and serving God in the public communion of saints, is like rain from heaven: there the offices are described by a public spirit, heightened by the greater portion of assistance, and receive advantages by the symbols of charity, and increase by their distinct title to promises, appropriate even to their assembling; and mutual support by the piety of example, by the communication of counsels, by the awfulness of public observation, and the engagements of holy customs.

“EVERY GOOD TREE BRINGETH FORTH GOOD FRUIT; BUT A CORRUPT TREE BRINGETH FORTH EVIL FRUIT.”—MATT. vii. 16.

Drones, to the eye, are goodly creatures, fairer and larger than the working bees; they make a great noise and loud buzzing, fly often forth in the heat of the day, as if they were busy to advance the public good; but they are all empty and vain-glorious shews, for they contribute nothing to the public store; but when, after a few wanton vagaries, they have whetted their appetites, they return to the hive and liberally feed on the bees’ labours. So one writes of young Marius, that by reason of the stoutness of his talk and gesture he was called the son of Mars; but when he came to the proof he was branded with a new name, and was called the

son of Venus. Thus many in their words appear gracious, but by their actions are basely effeminate and fickle, wanton and idle.

“ HE IS LIKE A REFINER’S FIRE, AND LIKE FULLER’S SOAP.—MAL. iii. 2.

Some hives will lie out two or three years together and not swarm, or if they do, very late, and then ten to one but they miscarry and die, both the old stock and the swarm too. Now the best way to preserve such a stock is timely to drive it into an empty hive, and the bees being many, will provide themselves sufficiently against winter, and swarm seasonably another year; so that, in some cases, driving is not an undoing and destruction, but a preservation of the stock. Thus the gardener cuts off a graft or scion to plant it into a new stock, not to burn it. So the Lord sometimes cuts off a sinner from his abominations, but he will not cast him into hell: and the Lord melts the heart of a poor sinner, but consumes him not; but as the goldsmith melts his gold, not to consume it all away, but to make it a better vessel; so the Lord melts a poor sinner, to make him a vessel of glory. The Lord will fire this proud heart of yours, and clip off those knotty lusts; but if you belong to him he will leave a little remainder of hope, that you shall be formed and fashioned anew, not consumed.

“ WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT.”—EPH. v. 8.

The queen bee is a very amiable creature and of a brighter colour and more transparent hue than other bees ; she is somewhat yellow about the belly, and on her legs inclining to a golden colour, and this colour intimates her princely nature, her royal blood, and sovereign dignity. Some heralds tell us, that none ought to bear gold-yellow colour in arms but emperors and kings, and such as be of the blood royal. Oh that none would bear the glittering shew of profession and holiness, but those that are of the race of Jesus Christ, the King of kings ! Then should we not be as the priests, princes, and people of Israel, a snare in Mizpah to the simple, and a net spread on mount Tabor to catch them that know us not : with an opinion of good men and good women, faithful Christians and true believers, when we are nothing less than hypocrites.

“ FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL IN ALL WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING.”
COL. i. 9.

The humble-bees’ combs are but rude lumps, a little hollowed for their own end and use ; the wasps and hornets’ combs for substance are unprofitable dross, although they be hexangle cells, and somewhat orderly framed downwards, yet upwards have no beauty, are nothing so polite and accurate. But the bees’ work is admirable, orderly, and geometrically proportionable, all full of wonder. To these

three sorts may we compare the obedience of most men professing religion :—there is the obedience of the common Protestant, perhaps somewhat more than a Pagan performs, yet a rude and undigested devotion, heaped up together by law and custom. Then there is the sham obedience of the hypocrite, in many things resembling true devotion ; superfine carriages, but yet on one side only ; to man-ward somewhat exact and formal, but to God-ward rudely indifferent, careless, and negligent. Whatsoever is done is not done with respect to God, and conscience of his commandments. Lastly, there is the obedience of the true believer, arising from a grounded knowledge of the will of God and faith, and from a holy fear and love of God, conscientiously and respectively to approve himself to God in the discharge of his duties, and it is exactly modelized and squared according to the rule of God's word.

“ THY WORD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET, AND A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH.”—Ps. cxix. 105.

It is an observation that a man cannot draw (even in natural things) a long straight line perfectly exact, except he draw it by some rule ; it is not the steadiest hand that can do it exactly, but there will be some crooks. And therefore men use to take a rule to draw a line by. Certainly it must be so in spiritual obedience ;—a man must have an eye to the word of God, and make that his card and compass to sail by, make that the rule and warrant of

his actions, or else though he hit (as it were) hab nab at some circumstances, it is not formal obedience. Now, though a man may (hand over head, as they say) make some hasty and tumultuous doings, patch up a great deal of mud together to make a wall, not caring for a square to make it perpendicular (as the humble bees rudely compose their combs hand over head without any great care or art) yet if a man would build a temple or stately palace he must do it perpendicular,—it must be evenly and orderly built according to an exact line both within and without also (and thus geometrically and regularly build the bees, as it were by square and plummet), or else one part will over-top another, and all tumble down. It is so in this cause—whatsoever is not squared by the rule of God's word, whatever materiality it may have, it hath little or no formality of obedience.

“ HAVING OUR HEARTS SPRINKLED FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE.”—HEB. x. 22.

“ IS THERE NO BALM IN GILEAD ? IS THERE NO PHYSICIAN THERE ?”—JER. viii. 22.

How many small things annoy the greatest ! Even a mouse troubles an elephant, a gnat a lion, a very flea may disquiet a giant. What weapon can be nearer to nothing than the sting of a bee, yet what a painful wound hath it given ! That scarce visible point, how it envenoms and rankles and swells up the flesh ! the tenderness of the part adds much to

the grief. And if I be thus vexed with the touch of an angry fly, Lord, how shall I be able to endure the sting of a tormenting conscience ? As that part is both most active and most sensible, so that wound which it receives from itself is most intolerably grievous. There were more ease in a nest of hornets than under this one torture ; O God ! howsoever I speed abroad, give me peace at home, and whatever my flesh suffers, keep my soul free. And thus pained, (as natural honey quickly applied to a sting is said to allay pain,) wherein do I find ease, but in laying honey to the part affected ? That medicine only abates the anguish. How near hath nature placed the remedy to the offence ! Whencesoever my heart is stung with the remorse of sin, only thy sweet and precious merits, O blessed Saviour ! can mitigate and heal the wound : they have virtue to cure me ; give me grace to apply them—that sovereign receipt shall make my pain happy. I shall thus applaud my grief ; it is good for me that I was thus afflicted.

“ THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNEW NOT GOD.”
1 COR. i. 21.

Bees, as many other creatures, have wit enough to find out remedies for the cure of their maladies, to preserve them strong and vigorous, and to recover themselves, being weak. They, if they be near the sea, delightfully gather of flowers that grow on the salt marshes, as thrift, hog’s scurvy-

grass, &c. and where they are remote from it, they drink water in sinks and saw-pits, and extract a nitrous saltiness therefrom. But man only being wounded by sin, hath not, by the light of nature, any wit to seek for remedy ; yea, man is careless of his eternal salvation. Every one is wise enough to do evil, but to do well they have no understanding. And no marvel ; for as the clearest eye beholdeth not the brightest object, except the sun-beams do come between to enlighten it, so the sharpest wits are not able to conceive the heavenly mysteries of our redemption, regeneration, and eternal salvation, without the bright beams of God's Spirit shining into them to enlighten them.

“ LET YOUR MODERATION BE KNOWN UNTO ALL MEN.”—PHIL. iv. 5.

As a man may eat too much honey, so pleasure itself grows loathsome and distasteful by immoderate use. *Nempe voluptatem commendat rarius usus*, Moderation is the mother of duration. It is like the steady burning of a taper, or the fire upon the altar, which never went out ; whereas headstrong violence, like a squib or flash of lightning, dazzles the eyes for a moment, but is instantly extinct.

“ THE POWER OF SATAN.”—ACTS xxvi. 18.

It is not good to provoke wasps and hornets, but it is much worse to provoke devils. Some rude

people will dare the devil, and challenge and bid the wicked fiend to come if he dare, and to do his worst, &c. Silly wretches ! the devil laughs at them to see how fool-hardy they are against him that hath them in his clutches already.

“ KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE ; FOR OUT OF IT ARE THE ISSUES OF LIFE.”—PR. iv. 23.

Bees, from their unwearied and restless nature, are incessantly active for their future preservation ; and therefore, when they cannot work, (harvest being warm but dry, and not affording many flowers,) they will steal and plunder ; and for that purpose send forth sundry emissaries, which search and examine every hive in their walk. At first, these wary spies make faint essays ; but finding little opposition or contradiction, they then, yet doubtful, enter, and finding the access easy, fetch a new supply of labourers to recruit their forces, so that after a little while it will be difficult, if not impossible, to withstand them ; whereas, a guard before the door, a stout resistance or peremptory repulse at the first, would have not only weakened but frustrated all their designs. Wouldst thou get the mastery over thy sin, (whatsoever it be,) give it altogether peremptory denials ; suffer it not to delight thee in the least tickling conceit and pleasing speculation. It will be easy to abstain from it when the denial is absolute and peremptory ; bar up the doors, give lust no audience, get

as much strength to resist as the lust hath power to attempt. If we cannot put out a spark, how shall we put out a flame? If we get not the mastery over the first motion to sin, much less shall we be able to overcome when it is brought to maturity in action. Sin is like the water—give it the least way and we cannot stay it; run it will in despite of us. And a stream riseth by little and little; one shower increasing it, and another making it somewhat bigger; so sin riseth by degrees.

“ FOR THE FLESH LUSTETH AGAINST THE SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT AGAINST THE FLESH.”—GAL. v. 17.

Bees, when they are pleased and contented, make an uniform and delightful hum with their wings; but acting illegally as in robbery, or discontented in the loss or absence of their leader, they are distracted, as it were, in their flights, (nay frights) and uncertain motions, and displeasing and harsh in their buzzing clamours; for as when the string of an instrument is out of tune, then the music doth jar; so when discontents predominate, all is in a confused medley and disorder. Discontents produce not greater mischief in the hive of the bees or of the commonwealth, than evil concupiscence doth in the soul of a man; it mars all his good actions. To mingle water with wine it makes the wine the worse; to mingle dross with silver it makes the silver the more impure: so evil concupiscence being in the soul of a man, doth stain,

disorder, and blemish his good actions, in that he performs them either with vain glory or self-respect.

“ DISCERN BETWEEN THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED; BETWEEN HIM THAT SERVETH GOD, AND HIM THAT SERVETH HIM NOT.”—MAL. iii. 18.

Many hate not sin, neither fly it, because it is sin; but as children do bees, not because they are bees, but because they have a sting; so do they flee from sin because it is hurtful.

“ HOW MUCH LESS MAN, THAT IS A WORM, AND THE SON OF MAN, WHICH IS A WORM ?”—JOB XXV. 6.

When bees are most angry in their swarming or fighting, cast but a little sand or water upon them and they are presently quiet, and give over their humming noise and contention. So, though nothing else can assuage the tumour of the proud, or quench the burning desire of honour in the ambitious, of wealth in the covetous, of pleasure in the voluptuous, yet the consideration of the grave can. He that seriously thinketh with himself, These goodly robes of mine clothe nothing but dung—all my dainty fare feeds but worms—I, who perhaps have power over other mens' lives, have no power over my own life, no, not for a moment. Even whilst I sit upon prisoners, and condemn guilty persons, I am arraigned in my conscience before God. He that keeps down his heart with these thoughts can no more be overthrown with

pride, than a ship which is well ballasted be blown away with a storm.

“ WHOSOEVER WILL SAVE HIS LIFE, SHALL LOSE IT;
BUT WHOSOEVER WILL LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY
SAKE, THE SAME SHALL SAVE IT.”—LUKE ix. 24.

There are no strains in music so delightful as those in which discords are artificially bound in with concords; nor dishes so dainty as those in which sweet things are seasonably mingled with sour; nor pictures so beautiful as those in which bright colours with dark shadows are curiously tempered. Nor would the sweetness of honey be so much commended, if there were not difficulty and danger in the compassing of it. Did we not fear the sting in the bees’ tail we would not so much value the honey in her mouth; but what with peril, if not pain, is procured, is better prized, more praised.

“ QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.”—1 THESS. v. 19.

Bees, as they are always laboriously painful, so especially when they have been long shut up and confined by unseasonable weather, then upon the first approach of a calm, sun-shiny day, do they rouse themselves up from their (now loathed) rest, or on the fall of a honey dew in a warm and mild season do they eagerly pursue their delightful labours. Shall irrational creatures take the hints of opportunity, and shall we trifle them away? Let

us be jealous and cautious of these creepings and turnings, these serpentine tricks of the flesh, and the world that would slay us. Lay hold when thou hast an opportunity to hear, to read, to pray. *Post est occasio calva*; Make use, take the occasion, when God hath led thee to privacy; thou art there where thou mayst freely have communion with thy God: slight it not negligently, let it not slip; it is God's call. Doth the Spirit of God whisper us, saying, This is a duty thou must do, and thy conscience doth witness with thy spirit that it is so, and thy own affections (if thou hast any heaven-ward, duty-ward) do stir thee also? Let not this wind blow in vain over thee, extinguish not the Spirit by neglect: when God offereth thee a hint by his Spirit, take it; take that hint, I say: a man may do more in an hour of prayer when he hath the motions and power of the Spirit, when the forerunner of it is some sweet motion cast into the heart of a man—some sweet touch of meditation puts him upon duty—oh! then if a man would make use of the sails of that hint, by that wind he might dispatch a great voyage of prayer, and return richly laden.

“ TO DIE IS GAIN.”—PHIL. i. 21.

The first life of a bee is scarce worthy to be called a life, *Vita est, non vitalis*. She is included in a little narrow cell, without any locomotive power; she hath neither eye to see nor organ to hear; is not sensible of danger, much less able to

prevent it ; is only capable of that meat which is put into the mouth, whereby it grows but unprofitably like a plant rather than a brute, for it can neither help nor hurt ; but after it is transmuted by death it appears in a more excellent and glorious condition : it is agile and industrious, beneficial to itself, to others. In a word, the first life is but a spark raked up in ashes, the other is a spark blown up into a flame ; the first is the sap in the root, the latter like the sap that fills the branches with leaves and mature fruit. Wherefore is it that the saints desire death ?—not that they might be deprived of the comforts of life ; they would not put off their clothes but to be better apparelled. They desire death to attain a life that might swallow up the weaknesses, sicknesses, troubles of this ; not as a gulf swallows up that which is cast into it, or as the fire swallows up the wood by consuming it, but as perfection swallows up imperfection, or as manhood swallows up childhood, not extinguishing it, but drowning it, that it is not seen.

“ TO HIM THAT KNOWETH TO DO GOOD, AND DOETH IT NOT, TO HIM IT IS SIN.”—JA. iv. 17.

By nature, bees expel the drones because they affect only ease, and content themselves to do nothing, caring only to avoid labour, which attends upon active and industrious employment. And why was Meroz cursed ? Because they came not out to the help of the Lord against the mighty ; and

idle and slothful spending of a man's life is every where in Scripture condemned. Wilful defects and omissions of doing good, bring damnation : he that wanted his wedding garment was thrust out of doors and cast into utter darkness.

“ THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD IS SURE, MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE.”—Ps. xix. 7.

Soft wax admits any stamp ; and simple persons are easily corrupted by themselves, or deceived by others.

“ IN THE WORLD YE SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION.”
JOHN xvi. 33.

The world is troublesome ; its gall is more than its honey—it is not only vanity but vexation : have all, it is but vanity—want but a little, 'tis vexation. Ahab is sick because he hath not poor Naboth's vineyard ; Haman wants but a knee from Mordecai, and this embitters all.

“ AT THE LAST IT BITETH LIKE A SERPENT.”
PROV. xxiii. 32.

All the ways of worldly pleasure are strewed with needles and nettles, which ever and anon prick and sting her darlings as they pluck her fading flowers : so that at best they are but like bears robbing a bee-hive, who ravenously rifle the combs, and with much ado suck out a little honey, but in the mean

time are soundly stung and swollen about their heads for their painful pleasure.

“ HAVE ALWAYS A CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE TOWARD GOD AND TOWARD MEN.”—Ac. xxiv. 16.

Honey, over-liberally eaten, causeth vomiting—the stomach cannot hold it: such are ill-gotten goods to the heart, as the Canaanites were to the good land: the land groaned till it had spewed them out; the conscience travails till it be delivered of these. They are to the soul as Jonah to the whale; the whale had devoured him but could not rest till he was restored; so it is with the conscience—if men play the whales and make fish of all that comes to net, the conscience will be as weary of such a burden, as the whale of the prophet’s bones.

“ SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE.”

COL. iii. 2.

Many lay the whole strength of their affections upon the things they fancy, (or as the cripple lays his full weight upon his crutches;) and therefore, when they are taken from them (as Pharaoh’s chariot wheels) they are drawn upon all four, and stick in the mud: yea, they set on their affections as the bee her sting, with all their might and strength; they convey into others their very bowels and hearts, and therefore when they are gone they are heartless.

“ BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU
SHALT BE SAVED.”—ACTS XVI. 31.

He that is pained with the bees' stinging, must for cure, speedily pluck out the sting, and then apply juice of mallows mixed with oil or honey to the wound. And the best remedy for a wounded conscience is, by faith in Christ, first to pluck forth the sting of sin, and then to wash in his blood, and for the future keep the heart above all keepings; for as the eye is subject to infinite distempers, so the conscience.

“ FORSAKE NOT THE ASSEMBLING OF YOURSELVES
TOGETHER.”—HEB. X. 25.

Bees, solitary and alone, (especially in the night or winter season) are quickly benumbed with cold and die; but many united together are agile and lively; nay, one chilled with cold put to the many, recovers, and hath a new return of life. So that I do not improperly speak if I say, they live as much by heat as by meat; and therefore, if there be many in a hive, though there be but a tolerable supply of food, they will do well; but if they have never so much meat, and be not many and numerous, they will miscarry and come to nothing. The communion of saints puts life into those that have it not, and increaseth in those in whom it is. The health of the body doth not communicate itself to others; it is otherwise in the life of the soul—the life of it makes others to live more; as iron sharpens iron,

so one holy man doth another : when two lie together they keep one another warm—there is action and re-action ; this is a powerful means to get and increase this life.

“ UNTO YOU THAT FEAR MY NAME SHALL THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARISE.”—MAL. iv. 2.

Bees in the spring, when the weather is fair, will work cheerfully ; but if the sun withdraw his beams, the wind blow hollow, the chilling showers descend, then they are presently dull and liveless, scarce appear, if at all not far from the hive ; it is an uncomfortable time—the spirits of the bees lower, are heavy and sad : we see it also in the body, that the animal spirits in the brain, which are the causes of motion and sense, if they be obstructed, there follow an apoplexy and death. So it is between Christ and the soul ; he is the Sun of Righteousness, by whose beams we are all comforted and cheered ; but when they are withheld, then our spirits decay and are discouraged. Summer and winter arise from the presence and absence of the sun ; the presence of the sun when it comes near causeth the earth to be clothed with a rich embroidery of fruits and flowers. And what makes the summer and winter in the soul, but the absence or presence of Christ ? what makes some so vigorous beyond others, but the presence of the Spirit ? As it is in nature so it is here ; the presence of Christ is the cause of

all spiritual life and vigour, but if he withdraws his presence a little, the soul fails.

“ SATAN HATH DESIRED TO HAVE YOU, THAT HE MAY SIFT YOU AS WHEAT.”—LU. xxii. 31.

Bees, when they assault a man, strike fiercely at the face—the beauty of man, and principally in the face aim at the eye—the beauty of the face. Thus Satan, though he be malicious against all mankind, yet chiefly against those who by Christ are conquered out of his hand ; and having their garments washed in the blood of the Lamb, are most beautiful. For as the panther raging on the picture of a man bewrays the hatred he bears unto him, so the devil, to testify how much he hates God himself, spends the greatest of his fury on them that bear the image of God. Thus do Satan’s instruments, incarnate devils, though they care not usually whom they wrong, oppress, injure, hate, yet most of all the holy ones in earth are the object of their hatred ; they are the drunkards’ songs, and a sport to the foolish. What muttering, what whispering, what censuring, what sinister construction is set upon every action of theirs ! what discovering, what blazing of infirmities ! what so high but they will reach it, what so deep but they will be sounding the bottom of it ; but a day will come when they will cry out with Cicero, *O me nunquam sapientem, et aliquando id quod non eram falso existimatum,* Ah me ! that indeed was never wise, but falsely

thought to be what I was not. And with those in the Book of Wisdom, *We fools thought his life madness, and his end without honour ; how is he accounted among the children of God, and his portion among the saints !* But the innocent heart shall then lift up a cheerful countenance, as knowing that though here it were despised, yet there it shall be justified and rewarded with a crown of glory.

“ THEY ARE WANDERING STARS, TO WHOM IS RESERVED THE BLACKNESS OF DARKNESS FOR EVER.”—JUDE 13.

Wasps gather not as bees, yet some seeing them running on the tops of flowers, and sucking in the cells, are notably deluded, supposing that they gather as well as the bees; whereas, they only suck to satisfy a wanton fancy, but carry away nothing for a future supply of themselves. Hypocrites in many outside duties may comply with believers, and have their conversation in such actions that they are usually practical in, and so deceive many who are easily beguiled with similitudes. All deceit is from similitude. False wares having the same die that the true have, deceive the buyers; so falling stars are like other stars. When we see men that profess religion false-hearted, many are apt to think that all are so; wherefore the apostles pray that they might abound in all knowledge and judgment to discern of things that differ: this proximity makes many deceived.

“ FOR BECAUSE OF THESE THINGS COMETH THE WRATH OF GOD UPON THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE.”—EPH. v. 6.

A lamp or candle by the brightness of it enticeth the bee (as many other flies) to embrace it, but by that means she is either drowned in the oil, or burned in the flame. So the shows of sin and the pleasures of the world entice the minds of men, that their hearts are drowned in many fears and sorrows ; and when they suppose that they have catcht all, they themselves are caught. Finally, corruption and destruction (the natural ends of all things under heaven) layeth hold upon them *qui lachrimarum causas tripudiantes peragunt, et ridentes mortis negotium exequunter;* Who go dancing through the causes of their own mourning, and with laughter act the tragedy of their own death.

“ PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL.”—EPH. vi. 11.

The titmouse is said to be a great destroyer of bees ; and, more easily and certainly to obtain his prey, will, in the winter, watch at the doors of their hives, (their castles of security,) and as soon as any come forth seizeth upon them, and eateth them ; if none appear he knocks with his bill, and they feeling the motion come forth to know the cause, and are presently devoured by him. In the spring-time he resorts to the willow-trees, (whither

the bees come to gather,) and there invades them, so that they are no where secure. And thus, and more active, is the great Apollyon, the devil, to destroy men's bodies and souls, sometimes fitting temptations to men's tempers and constitutions, (for he cannot by force, without our own consent, prevail over us.) As a bait of promotion for Absalom, because he is ambitious; of pleasure for Sampson, for he is voluptuous: every man will not be drawn to sin by every object; an earth-worm esteemeth not pleasure, and a man by temper voluptuous, esteemeth not profit much, nor an ambitious man either; and therefore the devil, who is wise (as Isidore saith), hath his $\mu\varepsilon\theta\omega\delta\acute{\epsilon}\iota\alpha\varsigma$, Ephes. vi. 11. and his $\beta\acute{\alpha}\theta\eta$, Rev. 2. 24, his artificial ways and deep reaches, and presenteth men with suitable objects, for the love of which he thinks they will be content to strain their consciences, and break God's laws; and presenteth them at fit times and places, for every time is not a season; all places are not opportunities. There is the hour and power of darkness; and there is the time of pleasure and prosperity, when men are apt to be regardless of themselves; and the high priest's hall to work upon Peter —the times of our weakness when we are wholly deprived of such a friend or governor, as might by their watchful observation of our courses restrain us from sin, or by their counsel uphold us, by their rebukes and corrections recover us if we fall.

“ GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT.”—EPH. iv. 30.

If the queen bee miscarry in the hive, or flying out of it for recreation, (for otherwise ordinarily she stirreth not forth,) come to some mischance, all her subjects are presently in a sad mourning posture; now there is nothing but confused discourses, a woful complaining, a cessation from work, and quickly a miscarriage and death of all. And if Christians sad and grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and cause him by their sins to go away from them, they cannot (if they be sensible of their condition) but be in a sad and mournful estate; for as the air is dark and chill, the earth cold and wet, and the face of the sublunary world uncomfortable, when the sun, which is the light and life of it, hath withdrawn his light, so must the face and state of the soul needs be very gloomy, when the Spirit, who is the Comforter, hath withdrawn his presence.

“ UNDERSTANDEST THOU WHAT THOU READEST ?”

ACTS viii. 30.

When a man crops a flower from the earth, he can get nothing out of it but the sweetness of the smell or the delightfulness of the colour; but when the diligent bee comes, she will make more of it, she will extract that which is (as it were) the very spittle of the stars. So when simple carnal-minded men read the poets and the philosophers, they

gather nothing but delight and pleasure ; but when the diligent bee comes, a wise man, a serious, considerate man, he draws honey out of them.

“ THE FULL SOUL LOATHETH AN HONEY-COMB.”

PR. xxvii. 7.

Bees, when they have filled themselves with water, they cannot gather honey until they have vomited it up. And he that will thrive by the food of the word must empty and unburden the stomach of his soul of all things that will hinder the purity and power of it from taking possession of his heart: he must bring a heart and a head like two empty buckets, to draw with greediness and joy the waters of life out of the wells of salvation : even the honey-comb, the sweetest thing in the world, is loathsome to a full stomach.

“ THE LORD WILL NOT SUFFER THE DESTROYER TO COME IN TO SMITE YOU.”—Ex. xii. 23.

Many creatures (in particular bees) by antipathy and instinct of nature, shun that which is contrary or obnoxious to their safety ; and men by their intellectual parts do foresee and discern what is hurtful and dangerous to them or their lives, and decline and oppose things that have a tendency thereunto.

“ WOE UNTO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.”
MATT. xxiii. 27.

As Sampson met the lion as an enemy when he was alive, but after he was slain he went unto him as unto a table; there was only terror while he lived, but honey when he was dead;—so doubtless, many men to whom the bodily presence of Christ, and the mighty power and penetration of his heavenly preaching, whereby he smote sinners unto the ground and spake with such authority as never man spake, would have been unsufferably irksome and full of terror, (as it was unto the Scribes and Pharisees,) can yet now that he is out of their sight, and doth not in person, but only by those who are his witnesses, torment the inhabitants of the earth, pretend much admiration and thankful remembrance of that death of his which was so full of honey for all that come unto him.

“ HAVING FOOD AND RAIMENT, LET US BE THEREWITH CONTENT.”—1 TIM. vi. 8.

Bees are diligent and painful in their work, but frugal and temperate in their feeding. Their food consists of two kinds, or rather one diversified,—wet and dry, honey and bee bread; so that you may draw a bill of their fare and a catalogue of their provision in setting down bread and water: and having these they have enough, for they want nothing. But many men lay out on a meal a

year's allowance, and waste as much provision in a few hours as were sufficient to relieve the famine of an army. Quickly do many men devour all that all other members (the caterers and purveyors) can bring in, yea, whatsoever art can devise, luxury and all the obsequious servant of the idol belly invent; so that Judas his purchase, Aceldama, is no way comparable;—that, indeed, a greedy grave employed to funeral uses, able in eight and forty hours, as it is reported, to consume the flesh of any carcase therein buried, but this, in four and twenty hours, consumes many carcases of fishes and fowls, and generally twice a day all the flesh therein interred.

“FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS QUICK AND POWERFUL.”—Heb. iv. 12.

What is a bee to a bear, or a mouse to an elephant? and yet if a bee fasten his sting in the nose of a bear, or a mouse creep up and gnaw the trunk of an elephant, how easily do so little creatures, upon such an advantage, torment the greatest! Certainly the proudest of men may have some tender part into which a sting may enter: the conscience is as sensible of God's displeasure, as obnoxious to his wrath; as subject to his word, in a prince as in a beggar. If the word, like David's stone, find that open and get into it, it is able to smite the greatest Goliath.

“BEHOLD, NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME, BEHOLD,
NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION.”—2 COR. vi. 2.

The drones are a lazy and careless generation, delighting themselves in sportful recreations and delicious dainties ; never providing nor forecasting for themselves how it shall be with them afterwards, but think to fare to-morrow as they have done to-day, and so succeeding days as they have days ; but the provident, prudent bee, finding a likely decay of the gathering season, and observing that the drones are only spenders and riotous wasters, do at last violently expel them their hives, which they are unwilling to leave, having provided nothing for themselves, and therefore readily return again ; but because they will take no warning, they then slay them without pity or compassion. And as dangerously do many men pretending for wisdom play the fools, delaying the practice of repentance, procrastinating to take the offer of grace, and thus deceiving themselves. They think to do it perhaps to-morrow or afterwards, and so oft cozening themselves, the time they prefixed sliding away, and then another is determined which likewise goeth away, but nothing is done, and so another, till at last time be no more. Take heed you be not deceived in this, I will do it now and now, but *modo et modo non habet modum*. The chariot wheels when they run, the second runs near the first all the day long, but never overtakes it. As in a clock, the second minute follows the first, but it

never overtakes it, so it is with us ; this doing of it now and now, and to-morrow and to-morrow, these little distances, deceive us and delude us. We think to do it in a short time, and by reason of the nearness and vicinity of the time, we think we shall do it easily, but we are deceived with it. As grasshoppers deceive children when they think to lay their hand upon them, they hop a little further and a little further, that in the conclusion they take them not at all, so it is with us ; we cozen ourselves in that manner, we lose our life, we lose our opportunity of taking grace, because we think it to be so near ; we think we can take it the next week or the next month, and out of this we are confident it is in our power, and so our time flies away and we have never part in it.

“ RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.”

2 TIM. ii. 15.

The bees labour diligently to get food for the supply of their young ; they bring it home to the hive, and lay it up in the combs, but, alas ! they are yet never the better for it, for they are fixed in their cells ; they cannot stir forth to take it, therefore they do more,—they bring them food and put it into their mouths, as oft as they need. The reason why men’s hearts are not wrought upon in the ministry of the word, is because many ministers labour not the right way to show men their sins, and to convince their consciences : they insist only

in generals, whereas a particular application brings every man his part and portion, and not only sets the dish before him, but cuts him meat and carves it for him.

“THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US.”

2 COR. v. 14.

If any shall demand why bees, of all creatures, are so indefatigably diligent and with unwearyed pains follow their sweet labours, flying sometimes abroad in stormy seasons, whereby (oft prevented of a return) they miscarry in the field ; nay, when they are old and grey, feeble and faint, they will venture forth, though they lose themselves, for most of them die at their work—*vitam sub fasce reponunt* ;—may I not answer, first, because they hope in winter delightfully in rest and quiet, to enjoy their plenty ? Secondly, some say for fear of punishment—those that are idle being enforced, but a fear of starving (the worst of punishments) prompts them forth ; for if they be not timely furnished with a competent provision, they must inevitably perish. Thirdly, because it is incompatible to their nature to be idle. They have a natural propensity and inclination to their honey-gathering labours. *Tantus amor florum et generandi gloria mellis* ; and this delight, as a watch wound up, carries them sweetly on through all difficulties and dangers.—Three goodly threads, which, twisted all together, have strength enough to draw the most sleepy sluggard out of his

bed of sloth and idleness. And if it should be questioned why the people of God are so constant, so faithful in such fruitless services, (as the world accounts them,) and not dashed out of countenance nor daunted by afflictions, but hold on their practice and diligence in a course of obedience, maugre the malice and mischiefs, the oppositions and contradictions of men and devils;—first, from the hope of a blessed reward, which makes them, with Moses, choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; secondly, from the fear of a just punishment, and a curse if they should decline and baulk the service of God; *for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive according to that he hath done.* And though there were weight enough (as a late learned divine observes) to set the most rusty wheels going, yet because these two may work in base minds, and are in themselves but sinister ends, which many that seem to go straight may look a squint upon,—fear in the fore-ward, and hope and reward in the rear-ward, marshall all their forces, and love in the main battle, or rather, *tota in toto et tota in qualibet parte* animates every one to valour and victory; punishment is servile, and hope of reward is mercenary. There is a third motive which is the peculiar character of a Christian mind, and that is love; and this winds up a Christian's affections to that intention of zeal and fervency. Reward hath

an attractive, and punishment an impulsive, but love hath a compulsive, faculty ; reward draws him, punishment drives him, but love hales him forward to the discharge of his duty : hope, like a tender mother, enticeth him with a reward ; fear, like a severe master, incites him with a punishment ; but love, like a sovereign lord, commands him. Hope hales before him, and fear blows behind him, and both on each side row him, but love within, like the very soul of obedience, teacheth him a natural motion.

“ HE WILL THOROUGHLY PURGE HIS FLOOR, AND GATHER HIS WHEAT INTO THE GARNER.”—MATT. iii. 12.

Bees are neat and cleanly creatures, and careful to carry forth all dross, soil, and filth, lest their hives should be defiled ; yet sometimes, because of long, violent colds, many enemies, weaknesses, because of some distempers, it is requisite for the bee-master to help in the purging of them. The church of God, after a long time of peace, is apt to gather and contract corruption, as water doth by standing, as the air itself will, if it have not the wind to purge it, and as it is in the bodies of men if they be not curiously looked unto : (after a certain time) they will gather such a burden of humours as will rise to a distemper, so that they must be let blood or purged, &c. Such is the infirmity of men’s nature and the malice of Satan, that enemy to mankind,

that the best of God's people will quickly gather some distemper or other and stand in need of purging. And we are as much beholden to God's corrections as to his comforts in this world, without which we should quickly settle upon our dregs.

“ WHOSOEVER HE BE THAT FORSAKETH NOT ALL THAT HE HATH, HE CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE.”
LUKE xiv. 33.

Bees in the honey season bestir themselves ; the winter is long and their enemies many, and therefore much pains must be taken before-hand, or else they will miscarry. And if they be late swarms, notwithstanding all their diligence, except there be an additional supply by timely feeding, want cannot be prevented. Were the winter short, robbers few or none, ill weather but a few weeks, as in Sicilia, Ethiopia, and some southern climates, small preparation might serve the turn ; but in our colder regions the greatest pains are seldom too much—sometimes not enough. Whosoever enters upon the profession of religion with vain hopes of ease and pleasure, doth but delude his own soul ; forecast, therefore, what will fall, and get provision of grace before-hand, to sustain. As if a man were to go a dangerous journey, he provides himself of weapons and cordials, and all the encouragements he can, lest he should faint in the way. Whereas, he that walks for his pleasure provides nothing, and cares not for his weapons or his cloak, because, if

a storm comes, he can quickly run under shelter. He that makes religion a recreation, can walk a turn or two for his pleasure, and when any difficulty ariseth, can retire and draw in his horns again ; but a true Christian, that makes it the main act of his life to please God, arms himself for the worst that can befall him : he is resolved not to retire for any trouble or persecution whatsoever, that stands between him and happiness.

“ THEY ARE ALL GONE OUT OF THE WAY ; THERE IS NONE THAT DOETH GOOD, NO, NOT ONE.”
—ROM. iii. 12.

Man swerving from the end for which he was created and serving the devil, the world, and his fleshly lusts, degenerates from his nature, and becomes worse than the very beasts, for they stand firm in their places enjoined them by God in their creation. The bee is careful to do God’s work, having no tutor nor remembrancer, but man is senseless and careless to obey his Maker.

“ THE THOUGHTS OF THE DILIGENT TEND ONLY TO PLENTEOUSNESS.”—PROV. xxi. 5.

As the bee sucks honey out of every flower, and a good stomach sucks out some sweet and wholesome nourishment out of what it takes unto itself, so doth a holy heart, so far as sanctified, convert and digest all into spiritual and useful thoughts.

“MINE EYES ARE EVER TOWARD THE LORD, FOR HE SHALL PLUCK MY FEET OUT OF THE NET.”

—PSALM XXV. 15.

There is no vice in a man whereof there is not some analogy in the brute creatures. As among us men, there are thieves by land and pirates by sea, that live by spoil and blood, so is there in every kind among them variety of natural sharkers ; the hawk in the air, the pike in the river, the whale in the sea, the lion and tiger in the desert, the wasp in the hive, the spider before the hive, sometimes among the flowers in the bees' walk. And see how cunningly this little Arabian spreads out his tent for a prey, how heedfully he watcheth for a passenger ! so soon as ever he hears the noise of a bee or a fly afar off, how he hastens to his den ! And if that silly, heedless traveller do but touch upon the verge of that unsuspected walk, how suddenly doth he seize upon that miserable booty, and after some strife, binding him fast with those subtle cords, drags the helpless captive after him into his cave ! What is this but an emblem of those spiritual free-booters that lie in wait for our souls ? They are the spiders, we the bees ; they have spread their nets of sin ; if we be once caught they bind us fast, and hale us into hell. O Lord ! deliver thou my soul from their crafty ambushes ; their poison is greater, their webs both more strong and more insensibly woven. Either teach me to avoid temp-

tation, or make me to break through it by repentance ; oh let me not be a prey to those fiends that lie in wait for my destruction !

“ GIVE ME NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES.”

PROV. xxx. 8.

The bee gives honey, but sometimes she stings : prosperity hath its sweetness, and also its sting. Sunshine is pleasant, but sometimes it scorcheth.

“ FEAR THOU NOT, FOR I AM WITH THEE ; BE NOT DISMAYED, FOR I AM THY GOD.—ISA. xli. 10.

Bees love their queen, and therefore will fight courageously in her defence. Is she present with them and excites them with her voice, (like a trumpet ?) they will, even to the last gasp, venture their lives ; they are in the eye of their leader, and that makes them bold and daring. And shall a Christian pretend love to his God, and not be courageous in the presence of his great Lord and Master, who is ever present with him, about him, and in him ? Undoubtedly ; he that hath seen God once in the face of Christ, dares look the grimdest creature in the face, yea, death itself under any shape. The fear of all things flies before such a soul : only a Christian is not ashamed of his confidence. Why then should he not be as bold for his God, as others are for the base gods they make for themselves ?

“THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND SONG, AND IS
BECOME MY SALVATION.”—PSALM cxviii. 14.

Bees, long shut up in their hives in winter with extremity of cold, upon a fair, calm day, when the sun hath warmed and cheered them with his quickening beams, will show their thankfulness (as it were) in a pleasing murmur, and dance about in many circumgiring motions and circling vagaries in the air, and then, returning into their hive, will make there a loud congratulatory humming; whereas, before, they were in a dull and silent posture. And it is as natural for the new creature, when it feels the Sun of Righteousness warming the soul, when it tastes of God in Christ, to show forth itself in thankfulness and praise; and it can no more be kept from it, than fire can keep from burning, or water from cooling. It is the nature of the new creature so to do.

“AN AFFLICTED AND POOR PEOPLE, AND THEY
SHALL TRUST IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.”—
ZEPH. iii. 12.

Bees, when they go forth in a swarm, will sometimes be provided of a habitation before-hand; some hollow tree or hive not far remote, where the bees died in the preceding winter. But when they come to it, if not before, they will prepare and purge it of all dead bees, stinking substances, rotten combs; and where the outsides of the combs

are dry and crisp, they will eat and pare off the rotten wax, as masons in building pare off the crumbling outsides of the weather-beaten stones, and then make a new front, that they may not after build upon a rotten, naughty, or weak foundation. Their art is not to pull down edifices, but to build them up, but they do that which belongs not to them properly, that they may do that which belongs to them, for they will not build upon an unsound and crumbling foundation. God, to make his children trust in him, casts them out of themselves : he will not build on a rotten foundation ; he will not build on carnal trust, pride, and covetousness, but he will demolish that rotten foundation with afflictions and crosses. He will use such means that we shall have small joy to trust in sin ; he will force us by crosses and afflictions to go from our sins ; he will demolish that rotten foundation, that he may raise up an excellent edifice and frame of the new creature, that shall endure to everlasting. The work of a physician is to cure nature, not to weaken it ; but if the body be distempered, it must be weakened before it be strengthened : to make that sound, he must give them strong purgations, that shall afflict them and affect them as much as the disease for a while, but all is to make them strong afterwards. So God afflicts us to drive us out of ourselves, that we may come at last to trust in him, in whom is all our good and happiness.

“ BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT.” 1 PETER v. 8.

Bees live like soldiers in a camp, and therefore, as besieged cities or armies that fear an approaching enemy, never dare give themselves wholly over to security, but always night and day have their scouts, centinels, *corps du garde*, to keep watch and ward, lest some of their many enemies should, by a sudden camisado, surprise or beat up their quarters. We have a hellish enemy, the devil, a roaring lion, who waiteth for a time of drowsy security, wherein he may suddenly seize on us and tear us in pieces. Therefore, when there seems to be most security and cessation of spiritual arms, let us conceive the most danger to be at hand, and prepare and arm ourselves against the day of battle. For Jerome saith truly, *Tunc maxime expugnaris, cum te expugnari nescis*; Thou art most assaulted when thou feelest no assault. When our adversary seems to sleep, he watcheth but an opportunity to run upon us and destroy us. If we were assured that some fearful enemy was upon his march and approaching towards us with fire and sword; the trumpets sounding, the drums thundering, the horses neighing, and the cannons roaring, what watch and ward should we keep! how would every one bestir him! and who would not thrust himself into the danger, and be ready to stand in the gap to save his country, his life, his friends, his liberty, his goods? But Satan, our arch-enemy, who seeketh

to destroy that which is far more precious unto us than all these things, yea, than all the world, (*For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*) is not only approaching, but also encamped against us with all his forces ; and shall we now sleep in sin, and be senseless in gross security ?

“ A GOOD CONSCIENCE.”—1 TIM. i. 5.

Bee-masters tell us, that they are the best hives of bees which make the greatest noise ; so that is the best conscience which makes the greatest noise with daily reasonings, before its own bar. If we never go to bed before we have parleyed it out thoroughly with our hearts, then we shall find of ourselves as Alexander said of Antipater, that he did wear white garments without, and was purple within ; so we will give no rest till we find some comfortable testimony of our amendment.

“ PUT OFF, CONCERNING THE FORMER CONVERSATION, THE OLD MAN.”—EP. iv. 22.

It is observable that the creatures nearest the earth, are most greedy to accumulate. What creature stores up so much provision as the bee ? But the birds of the air that fly next heaven, neither sow, nor reap, nor carry into the barn, saith our Saviour. We are next to heaven in profession, let us hate to be furthest off in conversation.

“ O LORD, HOW MANIFOLD ARE THY WORKS ! IN WISDOM HAST THOU MADE THEM ALL.”—PSALM civ. 24.

Bees are small creatures, but have great and daring spirits and almost deadly poison. Though industry and diligence can work much to tame other creatures, yet little on this. By a continued converse and frequent presence, their rage and fury may be palliated ; but once provoked near the hive, they acknowledge no respect to any. For the most part, those beasts have least immanity, that have most strength ; oxen, horses, and elephants, are tame and serviceable, but bees and wasps have stings : so wisely hath the Creator disposed, that there might not be a conjunction *et potentiae et malevolentiae*, that malice and might may not meet ; so they are suffered to have will to hurt and not power, or power and not will.

“ MANY WALK THAT ARE THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST.”—PHILIP. iii. 18.

Religion is the greatest enemy to religion ; the false to the true. *Favos etiam vespæ faciunt*, Wasps also make combs, though instead of honey we find the refuse of their young.

“ GOD, WHO COMMANDED THE LIGHT TO SHINE OUT OF DARKNESS, HATH SHINED INTO OUR HEARTS.”—2 COR. iv. 6.

The grub or worm in its first state or life is a rude

creature, not much delighting in itself, less delighting others ; but when it is shut up to be transmuted, then it is for a time a formless lump, without any beauty or comeliness : but wait a few days and the parts will appear, life will move in these yet imperfect members, which are at length perfectly formed, and then it comes forth an agile, useful creature. And as God doth not make the whole fabric of the world at once, though it was not impossible to him, being a God Almighty, but in the space of six days ; so doth God deal with his children. When God creates in his children a new heart, he suffers first their hearts to be as a rude and massy lump, full of darkness, and then sends his Holy Spirit into their hearts, which illuminates them and drives away those black clouds of darkness and ignorance, and then he breathes into them the sweet air of his Spirit : and thus out of Tohu and Bohu is the new creature formed.

“ MEDITATE UPON THESE THINGS.”—1 TIM. iv. 15.

We should do as the bee when she hath sucked sweetness from the flower—she better concocts and refines it in her own body, and so it becomes pure honey. Thus when we have sucked any precious truth, we should, by holy meditation, concoct it in our hearts, and then it would become pure and profitable honey.

“ THY PEOPLE SHALL BE WILLING IN THE DAY OF THY POWER.”—PSALM cx. 3.

The young bees, as soon as they have passed their second birth and transmuted their shape and qualities, and are winged and strengthened to fly abroad, presently fall to their work and imitate the elder bees. And so doth the believing soul, as soon as it is born again, strengthened and winged with grace from God, make after him in works of obedience, holiness, and praises, imitate the examples of the prophets and apostles, as they have followed Christ. Let disadvantages be what will be, you cannot keep young bees in the hive when once transmuted and winged: no more can you keep the regenerate soul from working the works of God, and with holy praises ascending to heaven, when they are once under the line of Christ’s everlasting love, and feel it shine mighty hot in them with full face, with perpendicular rays, but with a present rapture make holiness their work, and hallelujahs all their language.

“ THE OIL OF JOY FOR MOURNING.”—ISA. lxi. 3.

Honey is gathered with much art from great variety of trees and flowers; and joy is a honey, a fragrancy made from above, with much picking, choosing, and composing.

“TRULY OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER,
AND WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.”—1 JOHN i. 3.

Bees are neat, sweet, and cleanly creatures, naturally abhorring stinking places, and strong scenting herbs. It is true they gather of the flowers of some weeds which are bitter and offensive, but yet the flowers are not, (as broom, henbane, may-weed,) as your taste and smell may inform you. But where the flowers participate of the ill-scent of the herbs, they meddle not at all, (as gallopsia, cheese-runnet.) And Christ puts no toads in his bosom, (saith one,) nor believers wicked men into the intimacy of their affections: purity will bosom purity, corruption cannot delight in incorruption: heterogeneals will not incorporate, light and darkness are inconsistent, gracious and ungodly men cannot live and link together. A good heart cannot with more pleasure rest itself than in God’s resting-place, in Christ’s society, in the way of the Spirit, in the ministry of angels, and fellowship of the saints.

“OCCUPY TILL I COME.”—LUKE xix. 13.

In the commonwealth of bees, all are employed, none are idle; the commander directs and orders, the drones by their heat are very instrumental for the hatching of the young cure; every one contributes somewhat to the public good. And in the bee-hive of the church, there is no pretence for any

man to be idle in the profession of religion. Thou hast not riches, thou canst not give ; thou hast not place, thou canst not show countenance to others ; but if thou beest a child of God, thou hast the spirit of prayer, the spirit of adoption, the spirit of a son in thee, which enables thee to pray for thyself and others : there is no Christian so poor but he may do this.

“ LOOKING UNTO JESUS.”—HEB. xii. 2

Bees, though they freely act in all their undertakings, yet do they all with reference to the public, and in subordination to the queen, whom they not only love but after a sort live in, for without her they will live no longer in their old habitation, not at all, except they get under the regiment of another. And this, their queen, they delightfully serve and observe ; her silent directions do they readily comply withal ; once their carriage in and out of the hive is regulated and squared by a love of and awe unto this their commandress. And it should be with believers after this manner ; wheresoever we are or whatsoever we do in this world, our conversation here must be directed by a higher aspect. The ship, while it is tossed in the sea, is ruled by the pole star ; that must guide it : so in our conversation in the world, the staff of our conversation may be the business we have in the world, but the rule, the regiment of all, must be from heaven, with an eye to God.

“THEY THAT ARE CHOKED WITH THE CARES, RICHES, AND PLEASURES OF THIS LIFE, BRING FORTH NO FRUIT TO PERFECTION.”—LUKE ix. 14.

A *little* honey is sweet, *much* fulsome:—such is pleasure, whose insinuations are so cunning, that you shall not perceive your excess, till you be sick of a surfeit.

“DEARLY BELOVED, AVENGE NOT YOURSELVES.”

ROMANS xii. 19.

Revenge commonly hurts both the offerer and sufferer, as we see in the foolish bee, (though in all other things commendable, yet herein the pattern of fond spitefulness,) which in her anger envenometh the flesh, and loseth her sting, and so lives not long after. I account it the only valour to remit a wrong, and will applaud it to myself as right noble and Christian, that I might hurt and will not.

“WITHDRAW THY FOOT FROM THY NEIGHBOUR’S HOUSE, LEST HE BE WEARY OF THEE, AND SO HATE THEE.”—PROV. XXV. 17.

Hast thou found honey, that is, hast thou found the sweetness of a man’s familiarity or conversation? eat that which is sufficient for thee; that is, use his friendship or familiarity to sobriety, not altogether withdrawing thyself, lest he forget thee, nor yet too frequently visiting, lest he loathe thee; for it is better by seldom coming to make thy presence

desirable, than by frequent visits to make him weary of thee.

“THEY COMPASSED ME ABOUT LIKE BEES, THEY ARE QUENCHED AS THE FIRE OF THORNS, FOR IN THE NAME OF THE LORD I WILL DESTROY THEM.”—PSALM cxviii. 12.

Although bees have small strength, yet have they great anger and insatiable wrath, and when they violently pursue any, do not a little terrify and affright them. Such is the pertinacious and implacable rage of the enemies of God’s people, that if God did not wonderfully stand by, interpose, and support them, they would unavoidably perish: but they are quenched as the fire of thorns, which, although it makes a great crackling noise in the beginning, and a greater flame than solid wood, yet is suddenly extinct and consumed; so that, in a word, though wicked men tumultuously set upon God’s people, their violence in a moment shall come to nothing.

“I MEDITATE ON ALL THY WORKS, I MUSE ON THE WORK OF THY HANDS, I STRETCH FORTH MY HANDS UNTO THEE.”—PSALM cxliii. 5, 6.

Temporal occasions open the mines to dig out spiritual instruction; for Christians may climb by the stairs of these inferior creatures, to contemplate the glorious power of the Creator. A good Christian, like the bee, works honey from every

flower ; suffers no action, demonstration, event, to step by him without a question. All objects to a meditating Solomon, are like wings to rear and mount up his thoughts to heaven. As the old Romans, when they saw the blue stones, thought of Olympus, so let every object, though low in itself, elevate our minds to Mount Sion. A mean scaffold may serve to raise up a goodly building. It was once said, *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*; now better, *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere casus*, It is good to know the casual beginnings of things, it is better to know their casual ends. It is good to be a natural philosopher, but better to be a supernatural, a Christian philosopher, that while we intently observe the creature, we may attentively serve the Creator.

“A WISE MAN’S HEART IS AT HIS RIGHT HAND.”

ECCLES. x. 2.

Some use flowers only for the beauty or the smell, the physicians for health, but the bees for honey. So do wise and prudent persons apply their studies for the enriching and feeding of their minds.”

“A WISE MAN WILL HEAR, AND WILL INCREASE IN LEARNING.”—PROV. i. 5.

As a spider’s web is not therefore better because it is woven out of her bowels, so neither is the labour of the learned more contemptible, because, as bees, they gather much from others.

“ WITHOUT ME, YE CAN DO NOTHING.”—JOHN xv. 5.

Consider a bee out of a hive as a solitary insect, and it is the most helpless and shiftless creature that is. If she works alone, she cannot frame repositories to lay up food; would she breed? she cannot both hatch the young and gather meat; is she assaulted with enemies? alone she hath no defence nor power. Finally, she cannot secure herself from any, much less from the many evils and enemies whereto she is obnoxious. And what is a man out of Christ?—as a man in a storm that hath no clothes to hide his nakedness, to cover him from the violence of the tempest—as a man in a hurricane that is out of a house to shelter him—as a stone out of the foundation that is scattered here and there as neglected—as a branch out of the vine without sap and influence, ready to be cast into the fire. A man out of Christ that is not clothed with him, that is not built on him, that is not grafted into him, is a destitute, forlorn, and neglected wretch.

“ MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE.”

2 COR. xii. 9.

The weakest creatures have the strongest shelters. Bees have hives and hollow trees to secure them; thus weakness occasionally is a help, for conscience of weakness makes all creatures seek for supply out of themselves. So the conies (as Agur saith) hide themselves in the rock; they fly to their burrows, and the bees to their hives. Man is a

weak creature in himself, weak in judgment, weak in affection ; but the consciousness of our weakness should make us seek for strength out of ourselves, go to God in Christ, and then he is a kind of almighty man. *I can do all things* (saith the Apostle) *in Christ that strengthens me.* A Christian is omnipotent if he depend upon the promise and commit his ways to God, but he is impotent and weak in himself ; it is God therefore that must establish us.

“ NOT SLANDERERS, SOBER, FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS.”—1 TIM. iii. 11.

Gnats in numerous multitudes (like clouds) do nothing but play up and down in the warm sun and sing, and when they have done, sting the next hand or face they can seize upon. See here a perfect emblem of idleness and detraction ! how many do thus miserably spend their good hours, who, after they have wasted the succeeding days in vain and merely unprofitable pastime, sit down and backbite their neighbours ! The bee sings too sometimes, but she works also—and her work is not more admirable than useful ; but those foolish flies do nothing but play and sing to no purpose : even the busiest and most active spirits must recreate, but to make a trade of sport is for none but lazy wantons. The bee stings too, but when she is provoked ; these draw blood unoffended, and sting for

their own pleasure. I would be glad of some re-creation, but to enable and sweeten my work. I would not but sting sometimes, where is just cause of offence; but God bless me from those men who will ever be doing nothing or ill.

“THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLETH IN YOU.”—

1 COR. iii. 16.

The commandress of the bees is a queen, a royal creature, and therefore she works not—it is beneath her dignity to drudge and toil as the meaner subject; she flies seldom abroad, communicates little with the world; state procures respect and honour to eminent persons. Though she hath a sting, yet rather as an ensign of power, than an instrument of revenge, for she never useth it. It is the property of a base and dunghilly spirit to be vindictive. If I be a Christian, I am a king; shall I debase myself in sinful practices—shall I cast my crown in the dirt? God hath raised me and made me an heir of heaven; shall I abase myself to sin and to base lusts, (the devil’s drudgery,) so that I cannot rule my own members, and yet profess myself to be a king? When we are tempted to sin and to base courses, let us say as good Nehemiah when he was moved to fly, *What, shall such a man as I fly?* So should we say to any temptation to base courses of life, *What! shall such a man as I do this?* For a Christian, that is a king, that hath a guard of angels about him, that is the most excellent

creature in the world, for him to abase himself to the world ? He that is bred from heaven, for him to have no higher thoughts than the things below, to have an earthly mind or revengeful thoughts, is a shrewd presumption that he is only a titular Christian, and hath not received the inward and spiritual anointing.

“ GOD SAW EVERY THING THAT HE HAD MADE, AND BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD.”—GEN. i. 31.

All is one to God to make an angel or a bee, to create the brightest cherub or the most contemptible fly ; for in every creation no less than an omnipotency must be the efficient, and no more than nothing is ever the object.

“ YIELD YOURSELVES UNTO GOD, AS THOSE THAT ARE ALIVE FROM THE DEAD.”—ROM. vi. 13.

If the queen bee be slain or any ways miscarry, the whole hive is overthrown ; but if she be safe, though they have weakenings, meet with injuries, suffer from enemies, yet they will recover themselves and outgrow other dangers. A man’s darling sin is Satan’s strongest hold, whither, when by the power of the word he is dislodged out of other parts of the soul, he retires as to his most impregnable castle ; but if in this he be overpowered by the blessing of God on the word of his gospel, then is his dominion shaken, and the man driven to a deep detestation of himself, thrown down to the lowest step of a penitent dejection ; he is ineagered

with thirsty greediness for pardon and grace, and at length forced out of his natural estate.

“ HE THAT IS NOT WITH ME IS AGAINST ME.”

MATT. xii. 30.

Bees in their private quarrels are patient and regardless, they neglect and slight personal injuries ; but if their hives be assaulted, their commonwealth beleaguered or endangered with wasps, robbing bees or other enemies, they lustily bestir themselves, fight it out to the death ; whereas, the drones, as they watch against no danger, so they resist none, but love to sleep in a whole skin, letting all go at six and seven, (as they say;) like lazy passengers in a dangerous leak, will not lay hands to the pump, and yet must miscarry with the ship’s destruction. And are not most men in the world drones, not bees ? affected, perhaps, with their own troubles or reproaches, but silent and slothful in God’s cause and truth ;—then they are loath to stir, fearing hatred, trouble, obloquy among men ? If their own reputation be called in question, it will not a little startle them ; but if God’s name be blasphemed, his word traduced, his ordinances violated, the course of the gospel be stopped, in the freedom and liberty whereof is the church’s happiness and glory, and the failing of it, the destruction of a people ; yet they are little affected, it goeth not to their hearts, they keep silence, as if this, of all other things, did least concern them. When Jehu approached near

unto Jezebel, and espied her in her window after the fashion of harlots ; he cries out to them with her, *Who is on my side, who?* and the eunuchs threw her down. The Lord seems sometimes thus to say to us in the extremities of the church's affliction, and he seems to cry to us, Who is on my side ? If then thou be silent, that which our Saviour hath said, will be here applied ; who is not for him is sure against him, and so shall be accepted in the day of accounts.

“SHALL NOT THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH DO
RIGHT ?”—GE. xviii. 25.

Wasps and hornets are very noisome creatures, and therefore we seek their destruction ; nay, burn up nests and young, and that before they have injured us or ours, only because we know what they would do if they be suffered to live and fly abroad. And shall poor mortals think it much if God, who knows our thoughts afar off, and the principles within us, and what men would do if occasion be offered, which for the present they know not of themselves, as Hazaël's answer to Elisha imports, *Thinkest thou, &c.* No wonder if the Lord cuts off many in their youth and infancy, because he knows their nature, that they would do this and this. Such passages of his providence there may be, as to cut off children and young men out of the foresight of the evil that they would do to his church, because he knows their thoughts afar off.

“ THE RICH MAN SHALL FADE AWAY IN HIS WAYS.
BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT ENDURETH TEMP-
TATION.”—JAMES i. 11, 12.

The drones are always idle: observe them as often as you will, and you shall never find them carefully endeavouring their present or future good. Bees, though laborious creatures, yet if you come to the hive in winter, especially in extreme frosts and colds, are shut up, none appear; or if in a warm day they fly a little abroad, yet they bring nothing home, contribute nothing to the public treasury; they then seem to be as careless and as thriftless as the drones. But the drones are constantly idle, and therefore at all times you find them alike careless: come this day and you see them to gather nothing, and come another time and you find them gathering nothing. But the bees, though they be sometimes hindered for want of the external favour of the heavens that they cannot gather, as in the winter time; yet, when the sun returns in the spring, and the plants and trees begin to put on their summer robes, and the heavens are clear and smile upon them, then they diligently follow their delightful labours. Vigorous and spiritful actions are not always infallible characters of life. A man may be a living man and yet in a swoon, no action left in him: a man may be a living Christian, and yet be in some deficiency of spirit, and in some swoon, his spirits bound up, and not in case for action always in any kind; so that actions are not

sure characters of being in the right way to true happiness. For a godly man may be like a tree which may have life in it, when it hath neither fruit nor leaves upon it, as in the winter time ; but in another season they are more or less fruitful, for the bias of their soul is set to God-ward, and to heaven-ward ; and though it may by a rub be put out of its course, yet because the qualifications of their souls are heavenly, their affections are changed and turned, they will be exercising themselves in spiritual duties ; whereas, wicked men, in whom is no change of heart, are never heaven-bound ; they may pretend it sometimes and make fair shows and promises, as the drones in a fair day fly abroad with many a circling motion, and a great humming noise ; but observe them, it is not to add to the public store, but that they may with better stomachs devour the bees' labours. Thus the Pharisees performed many duties, made long prayers, but to devour widows' houses.

“ AN INHERITANCE INCORRUPTIBLE AND UN-
DEFILED.”—I PETER i. 4.

Every drop of honey is honey, and has the nature and definition of the whole—it is throughout like to itself. So our felicity above is homogeneal—heaven is all heaven—every corner of heaven is a heaven—every thing that is tasted a heaven—every thing that is heard a heaven—every thing that is looked upon or meddled with a heaven, a full felicity to the soul.

“ WHO, BEING PAST FEELING, WORK ALL UNCLEANNESS WITH GREEDINESS.”—EPH. iv. 19.

Bees are temperate feeders, but when they are violently robbed of their honey, or forced from their hives, they will then eagerly and glutton-like fill themselves, and scarce give over without smoking or much disturbance. Now they are like to lose all which they had painfully laboured for, and charily shut up with waxen covers, as under lock and key, till a time of scarcity, and they resolve therefore to have a share before all be gone. And thus many wicked men, having had by legal terrors a foretaste of hell-fire before their time, after their deliverance, grow a great deal worse, and knowing their time to be but short, fall on earthly delights more furiously, and grasp the pleasures of the world with more greediness and insatiable importunity.

“ THE STING OF DEATH IS SIN.”—1 COR. xv. 56.

A bee's sting easily enters in, and when the bee is flown away, yet the sting remains and works itself with more violence deeper, diffusing thereby the venom more strongly, and causing greater pain ; and the longer it continues, with more difficulty is it at last extracted ; so that no man that knows the danger, except he have the perfection of a mad man, would run the hazard of the anguish, by delaying to pull it out. And such is sin ; it easily pierceth th soul, and when the tempter is gone,

yet once entertained, it easily winds itself further in, and having the plea of continuance and custom, will not be easily shaken off. Shall a blackamoor change his skin, or a leopard his spots, in three or four days, which they have contracted in twenty or thirty years ? Oh no ! but as a late learned and holy divine observeth, The longer thou puts it off and deferrest, the more unfit thou shalt be to repent : thy custom in sinning will exercise more tyranny over thee, the curse of God for going on still in thy trespasses will be more heavy on thee, the corruption that lurked in thy own bosom will be more strong against thee, thy understanding will be more darkened with hellish mists of ignorance, thy judgment more perverted, thy will more stubborn, thy memory more stuffed with sensual emotions, thy affections more rebellious, thy thoughts more earthly, thy heart more hardened, thy conscience more seared, and thyself more sold to sin ; and every day thou continuest in this estate of darkness, thou art much more the child of Satan than thou wast before.

“ SEE THAT YE WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY, NOT AS FOOLS BUT AS WISE.”—EPH. v. 15.

Bees have many enemies,—the mouse, the wasp, the spider, besides robbing bees, their worst enemies. It is no wonder then if they keep a continual guard, lest they should be surprised, and examine every one that goes in and out, and are presently in alarms upon the least motion or disturbance ; their

safety and well-being lie at stake. A believer's condition is obnoxious to dangers, very liable to temptations; and shall we not walk circumspectly and stand always upon our defence? We are naturally subject to so many batteries and breaches, by the assaults of original sin and other implacable enemies to our souls, that there is extreme need of perpetual watch and ward, of repenting and repairing daily, lest the new man be too much oppressed, and be often surprised with many and cunning encounters of the old Adam. The consideration of this should prevail much with us, to set a daily guard about our souls. David was very watchful, yet he was surprised unawares by the sudden rebellion of his heart. We should therefore observe our hearts, as governors do rebels and mutinous persons. We see to what an excess sin grows in those that deny themselves nothing, nor will be denied in any thing, who if they may do what they will, turn all liberty into license, and make all their abilities contributaries to the commands of overruling and overruly lusts.

“FROM WHENCE COME WARS AND FIGHTINGS AMONG YOU?”—JAMES iv. 1.

What a pity it is to see these profitable, industrious creatures fall so furiously upon each other, and thus stinging and biting, kill each other in the very mouth of the hive! I could like well to see the bees do this execution upon wasps, enemies to their

common stock. This savours but of justice ; but to see them fall foul upon those of their own wing, it cannot but trouble their owner, who must needs be an equal loser by the victory of either. There is no more perfect resemblance of a commonwealth, whether civil or sacred, than in a hive : the bees are painful and honest compatriots, labouring to bring wax and honey to the maintenance of the public state ; the wasps are unprofitable and harmful hang-bys, which live upon the spoil of others' labour : whether as common barrators, or strong thieves, or bold parasites, they do nothing but rob their neighbours. It is an happy sight when these feel the dint of justice, and are cut off from doing further mischief ; but to see well-affected and beneficial subjects undo themselves with duels, whether of law or sword, to see good Christians of the same profession shedding each others' blood upon quarrels of religion, is no other than a sad and hateful spectacle, and so much the more, by how much we have more means of reason and grace to compose our differences and correct our offensive contentiousness. O God ! who art at once the Lord of hosts and Prince of peace, give us war with spiritual wickednesses, and peace with our brethren.

“ MY BELOVED SPAKE AND SAID UNTO ME, RISE UP,
MY LOVE, MY FAIR ONE, AND COME AWAY.”—
CANT. ii. 10.

Creatures have their instincts—there is a natural

instinct in every creature to that which feeds it. Bees go naturally to the flowers by an instinct ; so the spiritual soul that hath the life of Christ, runs to whatsoever may feed and maintain that life. All the creatures, as soon as they are born, run they know whither to go to suck, because that is ordained by nature for their preservation ; so there is an instinct in the soul to carry it to that which feeds and maintains it.

“ HIS MOUTH IS MOST SWEET ; YEA, HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY. THIS IS MY BELOVED, AND THIS IS MY FRIEND, O DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM.”—CANT. v. 16.

Let a swarm be hived ever so orderly, and the hive before-hand rubbed and prepared carefully, let it be covered and shadowed from the sun, and in a word, in the best manner accommodated, yet if the queen bee be wanting, there is nothing but discontent, confusion, and hurly-burly, and after a hopeless search, a final departure ; whereas, a mean habitation with her presence will give full content and satisfaction. Had we a magazine of comforts, were we possessed of heaven itself, with all its glory, without Christ, yet heaven without him would not be heaven. It is better, therefore, to be in any place with Christ, than to be in heaven itself without him ; all delicacies without Christ are but as a funeral banquet ; when the master of the feast is away, there is nothing but solemnness. What is

all without Christ ?—I say the joys of heaven are not the joys of heaven without Christ ; he is the very heaven of heaven.

“ HOW HARD IT IS FOR THEM THAT TRUST IN RICHES, TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD !”
—MARK x. 24.

Bees, by a natural sagacity, can foretel a storm, yet sometimes they are overtaken with unseasonable and rainy weather ; but then do they hie themselves apace homeward, getting under the lee side of a hedge, and at last secure themselves in their hives ; but as soon as the tempest is over, and the sun breaks out, they are abroad again, forgetting their former danger. Many men in their outward crosses and afflictions, while the storm and tempest of God’s wrath beats sore upon them, run to God as their rock, and enquire early after him ; but when once a hot gleam of former health and prosperity shines upon them again, they hie as fast out of God’s blessing into the warm sun, (as they say,) from sorrow to sin, to delight in sensuality, from seeking God to security in their old ways.

“ WHEN SHALL I AWAKE ? I WILL SEEK IT YET AGAIN.”—PR. xxiii. 35.

He that goes about to cure the wound of his conscience for sin with sensual delight, doth as one that is stung with a wasp, and rubs with a nettle the smarting place.

“ BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT.”
NUM. xxxii. 23.

As Jonathan's honey was sweet in the mouth but bitter in the soul, (for behold, his honey was turned into gall. And if the eyes of his body were enlightened, the light of God's countenance was clouded by the act,) so it is with every sin,—for though stolen waters be sweet, yet he knoweth not that the dead are there.

“ EVERY ONE THAT IS PROUD IN HEART, IS AN ABOMINATION UNTO THE LORD.”—PR. xvi. 5.

It is observable in the old law, that God hated the very resemblance of the sin of pride ; he would have no honey mingled in their offerings : *Ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey in any offering of the Lord, made by fire.* Indeed, leaven is sour, but what is there in honey that should offend—why no honey ? Because honey, when it is mingled with meal or flower, maketh it to rise and swell ; therefore the people of Israel must mingle no honey in their offerings : this was to let us see how God hateth the resemblance of the sin of pride.

“ I PUT ON RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND IT CLOTHED ME :
MY JUDGMENT WAS AS A ROBE AND A DIADEM.”
—JOB xxix. 14.

Some bee-masters will be over-diligent to kill the drones, because sometimes when they are super-

numerary, they will not only pester, but prejudice the hive, and at other times deceive the expectation of so large a tribute as they look for from them ; and yet in the mean time are negligent, or not sufficiently careful to prevent the devouring wasps, or robbing bees, which in a few days will consume more than the drones in a whole summer.

Bee-masters ought to be careful about the former, but most of all of these, because of that ruin and desolation that are quickly occasioned by them. As a shepherd should watch his lambs from flies, but most of all from wolves and foxes ; sure he is but a sorry shepherd, to kill the maggots in his sheep and let the former worry at pleasure. And surely (saith one) he is a sorry magistrate that stocketh, and whippeth, and hangeth poor snakes when they offend (though that is to be done too), but letteth the greater thieves do what they list, and dareth not or careth not to meddle with them. Like Saul, who, when commanded to destroy all the Amalekites, both man and beast, slew indeed the rascality of both, but spared the greatest of the men and fattest of the cattle, and slew them not.

“ HAVE FAITH IN GOD.”—MARK xi. 22.

Bees, though chilled and dead with cold, or drowned in water, if in a convenient season they be laid near the fire or in a hot sunshine, will revive after a while, and recover, as if they had never miscarried. For there is some hidden though un-

discerned life, and by the aid of that little remainder of vivifying power, (which was more strong originally, and is not yet totally extinct,) now further called forth and wrought upon by adventitious heat, there is a new quickening and life. So by the awaking of the north wind and coming of the south, I mean the blessed Spirit's breathing upon a regenerate heart, stifled dangerously with some pestilent lust, by stirring up and refreshing the retired and radical power of grace, that immortal seed of God never to be lost, will sweetly and graciously bring it again to its former spiritual, comfortable temper and constitution. The Lord's chosen may fall from their outward prerogatives and from the fruits, but that divine nature still abideth in them ; and it is only with their grace, as it is with the mind in distempers of melancholy and frenzy, with the sun in eclipses, with the tree when leaves and fruit fail it, with the natural life when it moveth not, nor yet breatheth sensibly, which in diseases of the mother is often discerned.

“ THE SNARE IS BROKEN, AND WE ARE ESCAPED.”
PSALM CXXIV. 7.

Bees, when they have been a while shut up and imprisoned *by unseasonable weather*, follow their work more eagerly on the first opportunity, (as a stream stopped for a little while will break out with greater violence after.) They will now lose no time, but be at their labours both more early and

late, than when they were not kept in ; nay, in such weather when (had they not been restrained before) they would have lain still asleep in the bed of ease in their hives. Sometimes the Lord may, for a time, retire the light of his countenance and sense of his graces from his children, for trial, quickening, and exercise of spiritual graces, that they may put forth themselves with more power, improvement, and illustriousness ; the cold comfort of a desertion in this case, being unto them as water cast upon the smith's forge, to make some of them especially to burn inwardly as it were in the mean time with new intention and heat, to break out and flame more gloriously. There are many gracious dispositions and endowments in the Christian's heart which would never see the light, at least with such eminency, were it not for this darkness. The brightness of lamps languish in the light, but they burn clear in the dark ; the splendour and beauty of the saints would never appear, were there no night.

“ EXHORT ONE ANOTHER DAILY, LEST ANY OF YOU BE HARDENED - THROUGH THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.”—HEB. iii. 13.

Bees troubled awhile at the hive will be very angry, and by and by very numerous, and so unresistable, for their fury and their numbers increase together. Perhaps but a few at first assault you, but being much opposed they call out many

partakers, and in a little time a few will prove a multitude : as rivers grow greater and greater, the further they are off from their springs, the more they enlarge their channels until they empty themselves into the ocean. Storms, we know, arise out of little gusts. The first risings of sin are to be looked unto, because there is most danger in them, and we have least care over them : corruption, till it be overpowered by grace, swelleth bigger and bigger, so that like rust it will, by little and little, eat out all the grace of the soul. There is no staying when we are once down the hill, until we come to the bottom. When the heart begins once to be kindled, it is easy to smother the smoke of passion, which otherwise will fume up into the head and gather into so thick a cloud, as we shall lose the sight of ourselves, and what is best to be done. Crush, therefore, the first insurrections before they come to break into open rebellions : little risings neglected cover the soul before we are aware, stifle them in their birth, stop the beginning, and so soon as they begin to rise, let us begin to examine who raised them, and whither they are about to carry us.

“ SEE THAT NONE RENDER EVIL EOR EVIL TO ANY MAN.”—1 THESS. v. 15.

The bee never stings but pays the price of it with her life. By this God instructs us that we should not wrong our neighbours, for we ourselves shall, if not first yet worst suffer, and they, perhaps, receive

little or no prejudice, but we shall be as sure as the bees to die for it. And yet the son of Sirach praiseth that creature, saying, *The bee is small among fowls, and her fruit hath the beginning of sweetness.* But this gives her no security to escape death: if she stings she must perish, and if her many excellencies will not exempt or free her from destruction if she doth ill, much less shall we. We are most savage beasts—we first wrong our neighbours who never injured us; nay, we are far worse in this respect than bees, for if you suffer them to live in their hives, and by molesting and vexing of them put them not upon a necessity of defence, they will never hurt, never injure, never sting, but go their ways and follow their business. But thou, who art a reasonable man, dignified with so much honour and glory, imitates the beasts, and that towards those that are of the same rank with thee, wrongest, hurtest, and devourest thy brother. What saith Paul, *Why do ye not rather take wrong, why do ye not suffer yourselves to be defrauded? nay, you do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren.* You see, then, you wrong yourselves, when you wrong others, and that you receive a courtesy when you are injured.

“KNOW YE NOT THAT YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD?”—1 COR. iii. 16.

Bees will not continue in a stinking or impure hive; and therefore, they that delight in them pre-

pare the stools where they set them with perfumes, sweet-smelling boughs, and fragrant flowers, and other delightful things, whereon the bees when they go forth out of the hive may light, lest ill savours should force them to forsake their stations. And thus deals the Holy Spirit: our soul is the hive, accommodated and furnished with sweet spiritual gifts and graces; but if there be bitterness, and anger, and wrath, he will forsake such hives. And therefore, the blessed and wise husbandman (namely, St. Paul) doth endeavour to trim and prepare our hives, (our souls,) and that without knife or any other iron instrument, and calls us a spiritual bee-fold, which yet he first purgeth with prayers, with labours, and all things necessary hereunto.

“RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.”

2 TIM. ii. 15.

Bees with their swift and nimble wings, fly from flower to flower, and draw out the latent native sweetness, with a harmless, unprejudicial robbery, that therewith at length they may provide and afford sweet honey for the sons of men. So the ministers of the gospel are solicitously careful with the light wings of meditation, to light on the pleasant and delightful gardens of the Scriptures, that they may pleasingly instil and drop in the sweet honey of faith into the hearts of their hearers.

“ GO TO THE ANT, THOU SLUGGARD.”—PROV. vi. 6.

Bees prepare their food in summer—they borrow not, they beg not, but exercising their natural endowments, are diligent in labour, and that without force or compulsion, and never give over while the weather and season serveth. And although they be weak and small creatures, yet with their nimble wings fly through the valleys, and over the mountains, the woods, and forests, though some miles remote and distant from their habitations, gathering of every profitable tree and flower, and not only the elder but the younger also; and are images herein of and patterns to thrifty householders, who diligently labour themselves, and excite and encourage all theirs from their youth to provide for future. Secondly, their great prudence appears in understanding the seasons for their gathering, providing in the summer against winter; for if weather would give leave, they should in vain seek for honey in the winter. Thirdly, so great is their sedulity and diligence, that they are not altogether idle in the night, but then trim their hives by biting off the staring and offensive straws, eating down their rotten combs where there be any, pulling forth their dead spet, which they carry forth in the day, hatching their young, and probably feeding of them. Fourthly, their justice; they rob not those that are laden, but each gathers for herself and all the rest, for they are political. Fifthly, their astrology in

foreseeing change of weather, when they will not venture far from their hives. Sixthly, this is also praiseworthy and imitable, that they carry forth their dead from the hive.

“I HATE VAIN THOUGHTS.” PSALM cxix. 113.

Wasps are bold and saucy: whatsoever fruits, flesh, plums, sweetmeats you have, they will impudently intrude, and if they be not prevented, carry away a portion. And such are troublesome and vain thoughts, crowding into our best and most religious services. Abraham must drive away the birds from the sacrifices, and we must continually watch against vain and evil thoughts, which will always come before they be sent for; but let them find entertainment accordingly.

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICITION WORKETH FOR US A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY.”—2 COR. iv. 17.

If nature teach bees not only to gather honey out of sweet flowers, but out of supposed bitter, shall not grace teach us to draw even out of the bitterest condition something to better our souls?

“LORD, ALL MY DESIRE IS BEFORE THEE.”

PSALM xxxviii. 9.

Bees are affected with a deep degree of love to their leader, with whom (having nothing) they esteem themselves happy; but without her (in the

greatest plenty and fulness) are full of perplexity and trouble. If she goeth forth of the hive, they (leaving house, children, goods,) follow after, and stay where she abides; if she, being weary and faint, fall by the way, they will encompass her, stay with her, and, returning no more to their forsaken, full-stored hives, starve with her, rather than leave and desert her. This ardent love and affection, planted in them by nature, eats up and devours all other desires and over-eager delights in any contentments, as worthless and empty. So that the sun-flower doth not more naturally turn towards the sun, and the iron to the loadstone, and the loadstone to the pole star, then the domestic honey bees embrace and affect the queen bee. And a believing soul is as much, nay, more deeply and dearly enamoured of her beloved, advancing Jesus Christ highest in his thoughts, and prizing him far above the pleasures and profits and glories of the whole world. He so sets his eye and longing upon him, as to hold himself for ever lost without his love, and for the gaining of it, if need were, would he pass through a piece of hell. Thus are the current of his best affections and all the powers of his humbled soul, bent and directed towards him. He vows and gives up the flower and prime of all his abilities, loves, joys, endeavours, performances in any kind, to his highest majesty. He consecrates all the powers and possibilities of body and soul, to do him the best and utmost service he can any

ways devise, and still grieves and walks more humbly because he can do no better service.

“THEY ALL LOOK TO THEIR OWN WAY, EVERY ONE FOR HIS GAIN FROM HIS QUARTER.”—ISA. lvi. 11.

Bees work all in common, feed in common, breed up their young in common: each provides for his fellow as for herself,—every one is affected and sympathizeth in a common danger, as if it were her own alone. In a word, each doth fight with undaunted resolution in the defence and preservation of her fellow, as if it were her own particular injury. How many bastard Christians are there that sympathize not with their brethren, whose hearts are neither enlarged with lightsomeness, nor yet eclipsed with grief, as they hear of the prosperity or oppression of God’s people. Pitiless and hard-hearted cannibals, who all this while so many noble limbs of that blessed body of the reformed churches have lain in tears and blood, did never take to heart, to any purpose, or trouble themselves at all with their grievous troubles, but have sottishly and securely lain at ease in Sion, not helping the people of God so much as with a hearty fellow-feeling, wrestling with God in prayer, set days to seek the return of God’s face and favour: men they are of the world, which have their portion in this life, who feel nothing but worldly losses, know nothing but earthly sorrows, relish nothing but things of sense. If they be stung with a dear year, they howl and take on

immoderately; but let Joseph be afflicted, God's people in disgrace, the daughter of Sion weep bitterly and have none to comfort her, these merciless men are no whit moved—they have not a tear, a groan, or sigh, to spend in such a woeful case.

“O WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM! WHO SHALL DELIVER ME?”—ROM. vii. 24.

Wasps are very dangerous enemies to bees, being bold and strong. They will first prey on dead bees, which they divide and carry by halves to their nests, but they quickly proceed further, and venture into the hives and rob the combs, and will after come with such numbers that they will destroy the whole stock unless they be timely prevented, which must be done not so much by observing and killing them near the hives, but finding out their nests, and destroying them altogether. For the subduing of ourselves it is good to follow sin to the first-hold and castle, which is corrupt nature. The streams will lead us to the spring head; indeed, the most apparent discovery of sin is in the outward carriage: we shall see it in the fruit before in the root, as we see grace in the expression before in the affection, but yet we shall never hate nor subdue sin thoroughly, till we consider and fight against it in the poisoned root from whence it ariseth. It is a good way upon any particular breach of our outward peace, presently to have recourse to that which breeds and foments all our disquiet. Lord, what do

I complain of this my unruly passion, I carry a nature about me, subject to break out continually on any occasion. Lord ! strike at the root, and dry up the fountain in me, for otherwise, though the streams were stopped, and the branches cut off, and the sparkles quenched, yet there would be a perpetual supply, as long as the poisonous root remains.

“ HOW LONG SHALL THY VAIN THOUGHTS LODGE
WITHIN THEE ?”—JER. iv. 14.

Many bees, especially when the gathering season is over, and the state of flowers decayed, about August will be curiously prying into their fellows' hives ; at first a few give the onset, and if they be let alone, unresisted, or weakly opposed, then they double and treble their forces, fetching at their return more of their company, and violently make a prey of all. But if these scouts and ringleaders as they press in be beaten out, roughly entertained, and stoutly opposed and fought withal, they will then by degrees desist, and at last quite give over. Vain and wicked thoughts, if men give way unto them without checking the motions of them, will press (as busily as flies in summer) into the heart, but a good heart will not own them, nor allow himself in them, but stands at stave's end with them, casts them off as hot water doth the scum, or as the stomach does that which is noisome unto it. They find not in it that entertainment which they have in carnal hearts, where the scum seethes in,

which are stews of unclean thoughts, shambles of cruel and bloody thoughts, exchanges and shops of vain thoughts, a very forge and mint of false politic and undermining thoughts, yea, often a little hell of confused and black imaginations.

“ LAY NOT UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES UPON EARTH.”—MATT. vi. 19.

See you that narrow-mouthed glass which is set near to the hive ? Mark how busily the wasps and flies resort to it, being drawn thither by the smell of that sweet liquor wherewith it is baited ; see how eagerly they creep into the mouth of it, and fall down suddenly from that slippery steepiness into that watery trap from which they never rise ; there, after some labour and weariness, they drown and die : you do not see many of the labouring bees look that way—they pass directly to their hives, without any great notice taken of such a pleasing bait. Idle and ill-disposed persons are drawn away with every temptation ; they have both leisure and will to entertain every sweet allurement to sin, and wantonly prosecute their own wicked lusts, till they fall into irrecoverable damnation : whereas, the diligent and laborious Christian, that follows hard and conscientiously the works of an honest calling, is free from the danger of these deadly enticements, and lays up honey of comfort against the winter of evil. Happy is that man who can see and enjoy the success of his labour ! but however, this we are

sure, if our labour cannot purchase the good we would, it shall prevent the evil we would avoid.

“O DEATH! WHERE IS THY STING?”—1 COR. xv. 55.

A bee stinging a dead body takes no hurt, but stinging a live body loseth both sting and life together. In like manner, death, so long as it stung mortal men only, which were dead in sin, was never a whit the worse, but when it stung Christ once, who is life itself, by and by it lost both sting and strength. Therefore, as the brazen serpent was so far from hurting the Israelites, that contrariwise it healed them: after the same sort death is so far from hurting any true Israelite, that on the other side, if affliction, as a fiery serpent, sting us, or any thing else hurt us, it is helped and redressed by death.

“EVERY CREATURE OF GOD IS GOOD, AND NOTHING TO BE REFUSED.”—1 TIM. iv. 4.

That honey is sweet, it is not a conceit only, but the natural quality of it is so: yet out of a taste of the sweetness, to think we cannot take too much of it, is a misconception paid home with loathsome bitterness; though our fancy be ready to conceive a greater blessing in outward good things than indeed there is, yet we must not deny them to be blessings.

“I CRIED BY REASON OF MY AFFLICTION UNTO THE LORD.”—JON. ii. 2.

Bees, when they are abroad at their work, if the

clouds overcast, the air grow dark, there be any prelude to a storm, which they are very sensible and apprehensive of, speedily and in haste, thick and threefold, repair to their hives for shelter and security. And believers never pray so heartily, deny themselves so thoroughly, cling so fast to God, as when a storm is towards, or when they are overtaken by a tempest of persecution.

“YE HAVE IN HEAVEN A BETTER, AND AN ENDURING SUBSTANCE.”—HEB. x. 34.

Bees are not querulous, complaining, or discontented creatures, for when they have with many a sore day’s labour and heavy burden filled their hive, and thereby furnished themselves against a winter’s want, yet if they be driven and robbed of all, have left neither meat nor materials to put in any, yet will, if the weather serve, speedily and cheerfully renew their labours, and with double diligence seek out for a future supply. And shall believers think much to suffer the spoiling of their goods, all that they have travelled and sweat for, and when they have by many a dear day’s labour got a little somewhat together, then to be spoiled of all in a moment, seeing they know they have in heaven a better and more enduring substance?

“OUR OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM.”

ROM. vi. 6.

When the worm dies, which is a more imperfect creature, then it revives again, but is quite another

from what it was before in every part and member: before, it was unable to act for its own preservation or the good of others, could not move out of its place; in a word, do nothing but eat what was brought into it; but after a transformation and renovation, it is agile and active, laborious and profitable. And in the new birth, *si licet parvis componere magna*, there must be a mortification of the old man, and then, an universal change and alteration in the whole man. For a new spirit is universal—it goes through the whole man, leavens the whole lump; the new nature is common to all the powers, not like a little spring, that takes beginning in some piece of ground and ends in the same, but like the great ocean, that encompasseth the whole world. And as it is universal, so it is alterative too; it amends not the outside only, but the inward man also. It gives a man a new temper, it makes him that was fearful and timorous become bold and courageous, him that was peevish and passionate to be of a meek and quiet spirit, him that was dull and cold to be zealous and fervent; it makes him, with Onesimus, profitable to himself and others.

“ DRAW ME, WE WILL RUN AFTER THEE.”

CANT. i. 4.

Bees have a natural and inbred love to their queen, which makes them in their absence long

after her, nay, unweariedly seek for her without any other content or satisfaction but her presence and company ; and finding her, they will not be severed nor sundered ; pull them away as oft as you will from her, yet still they will draw near and cling to her. Carry her whither you will, if they be sensible of it, you have their company, also. How doth this condemn the want of love and affection of many subjects to their governors, of many people to their God, whom a little pleasure or profit shall easily divide ! But though it be thus with the most, yet there is a disposition in the saints to long after the Lord, and it is not an empty choice that consists only in affection or in the naked resolution of the mind, but it is such a choice as hath strong affections running together with it, a strong inclination carrying the soul to him, so that though he be hindered many times, and often in his life unruly lusts come and make a separation between the Lord and him, yet he cannot abide to be long from him. It is the Lord that he loves ; he cannot for his heart choose another master, but it is he with whom he will dwell, live, and die. And if some have quite lost their natural affections to their God, no wonder then if they are weak in their affections to their governors, and bandy them as tennis balls of state, and smite them into every hazard.

“ ALL IS VANITY.”—ECCLES. i. 2.

No worldly pleasure hath any absolute delight in it, but as a bee, having honey in the mouth, hath a sting in the tail. Why am I so foolish to rest my heart upon any of them, and not rather labour to aspire to that absolute God, in whom is nothing savouring of grief, nothing wanting to perfect happiness ?

“ THE SECRET OF THE LORD IS WITH THEM THAT FEAR HIM.”—PS. xxv. 14.

It is not good to eat much honey, because it is flatuous and windy ; so he who is a searcher of human majesty shall be oppressed with glory ; for as too much light dulls and dazzles the sight, so too great inquiry into the secrets of God blinds the understanding ; therefore saith Paul, *Let no man more highly think than he ought to think, but to think soberly, and seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength.* And as honey is sweet while it is tasted, but if it be taken too much it swells and kills, so the inquisition of the Divine Majesty and of heavenly secrets is delightful, but if it be too much, it kills with error or swells with pride.

“ THE ETERNAL GOD IS THY REFUGE.”

DEUT. xxxiii. 27.

Bees are molested with many evils and enemies :

some endanger them at or near their hives, others assault and often surprise them in the fields, as the hornet, titmouse, spider, but many more miscarry by frosts and snows in winter, by cold storms, chilling and tempestuous winds in the spring, so that they are never secure (though they help themselves in their troubles by the lee side of a hedge encompassing a hill, and especially with the nimbleness of their wings) but in their hive, nor always there except their keeper be more careful. How many are the miseries of the sons of men! Ben Adam, Ben Enosh, if the son¹ of Adam, presently the subject of sorrow. A wicked man sometimes in lesser distresses may find shelter in earthly comforts, but if the storm grow black and raging, these will prove an Egyptian reed, which not only deceives but wounds us with the splinters: a deceitful brook then fails the thirsty passenger, when there is most need of refreshing; Job's miserable comforters. And he will be beaten out of all help from them, and be as a naked man in a storm, as an unarmed man in the field, or as a ship tossed on the sea without an anchor, which presently dasheth upon rocks, or falleth upon quicksands. But a believer, when he is driven out of all comforts below, nay, when God seems to be angry with him, can appeal from God angry to God appeased; he can wrestle and strive with God by God's own strength, plead with God by his own arguments. Finally, when he is beaten out of all comfort, he

hath (a hive) a God to run to, and therefore can with David in his greatest exigencies comfort and encourage himself in the Lord his God. In this he takes sanctuary, that he is in covenant with him who sits at the stern and rules all, and hath committed the government of all things to his Son, our brother, our Joseph, the Second Person in heaven. We may be sure no hurt shall befall us that he can hinder, and what cannot he hinder that hath the keys of hell and of death?—unto whom we are so near that he carries our names in his breast and on his shoulder, as the high priests did those of the twelve tribes. Though his church seem a widow neglected, yet he will make the world know that she hath a husband will right her in his good time, for when men know us least, God will know us most; he knows our souls in adversity, and knows them so as to support and comfort them, and that from the spring-head of comfort, whereby the sweetest comforts are fetched.

“BEWARE OF MEN.”—MATT. x. 17.

There is nothing more dangerous than honey mixed with poison, and there is no man more perilous than a flattering, fair-tongued man, that speaketh out of a hollow heart.

“PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.”—1 THESS. v. 17.

We must be diligent in our calling, not like the sluggard or the drone in the hive, but like the

labouring bee, taking the time while time is, whilst the sun shineth making hay, which condemneth such, that though they will not be altogether without a calling, nay, more than that, will sanctify it by the word and prayer evening and morning, yet will be negligent in it, either too late at it, lying in their beds, turning them with the sluggard (like the door on the hinges), folding their hands, and crying, Yet a little more sleep, or else tattlers in their business (omitting many days) with a show of walking in their calling, but in truth nothing less.

“**QUICKEN US, AND WE WILL CALL UPON THY NAME.**”—**PSALM lxxx. 18.**

Drones have larger bodies than bees, seem fairer creatures, fly oft in and out of the hives with a great noise and humming sound, but yet *nil dignum tanto sonitu*, they labour not, gather nothing, are all in appearance, nothing in work or worth. And many hypocrites by common gifts planted in their wills and affections, by excellent moral virtues of justice, temperance, and patience, may many times exceed the godly in outward appearance, as dead bodies are greater and longer than living bodies, than the same bodies living, but yet want a soul to actuate and quicken them.

“**WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY, NOT AS FOOLS BUT AS WISE, REDEEMING THE TIME.**”—**EPH. v. 15, 16.**

Bees, when they are new driven or go forth in a

swarm, if they be not desperately few, or the season quite gone, labour more diligently and improve their time more carefully, than other hives that are well provided for, and therefore will be more early and late at their work than others, so by diligence redeeming the time. Thus do these unreasonable creatures teach reasonable men, by their continued care and providence, and laborious pains-taking to increase their little; for if the iron be blunt, then he must put to the more strength, saith the preacher, and *maximum mediocris ingenii subsidium diligentia*,—it is most incredible what industry, and diligence, and exercise, and holy emulation, are able to effect, for the bettering and increasing of our spiritual gifts. There is no usury so lawful as of spiritual talents, nor do I know any so profitable usury, or that multiplieth so fast as this doth; your use upon use, that doubleth the principal (almost) in seven years, is nothing to it. Oh then! cast in thy talents into the bank, make thy returns as speedy and as many as thou canst, lose not a market or a tide if it be possible, be instant in season and out of season, omit no opportunity to take in and put off all thou canst; so, though thy beginnings be but small, thy latter end shall wonderfully increase: by this means thou shalt not only profit thyself in the increase of thy gifts unto thyself, but (which no other usury doth beside) thou shalt also profit others, by communicating of thy

gifts unto them, which is the proper end for which they were bestowed.

“ AS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY, LET US DO GOOD UNTO ALL MEN.”—GAL. vi. 10.

If the ant must be praised and imitated for her industry and diligence, in that she carefully provides her food in summer and her meat in harvest, when as yet neither man nor beast (as far as I know) is any whit the better, the fuller, the richer for all her labours; how much more worthy of praise and imitation is the industrious bee, which in diligence is more abundant, in pains-taking more earnest, in profit above measure? Let as many, then, as desire true praise and imitation cast gifts into the common treasury of the church, employ their good parts and spiritual graces, so as they be some way or other profitable and serviceable to their brethren and fellow-servants in church.

“ TO-DAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS.”—HEB. iv. 7.

Delays in any thing that is good are ill, and in the best things worst. Wax when it is chafed will take an impression, but if the seal be not speedily put to it, it returns to its former hardness, and the best affections of the best men, if they be not taken in the heat, abate, and lessen, and die.

“ HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.”

EXODUS xx. 12.

The wasps, after their aged mother is unable to fly abroad, (having her wings worn with former labours,) provide for her and bring her food as long as they themselves subsist, really performing what is reported of the stork. But how many worse than brutes are to be found in this last age without natural affection ? if at all relieving their parents, yet after such a niggardly and sparing manner, that a man shall never come where their parents are, but hear them cry out like Rebecca, that they are weary of their lives, or, like Jonah, it is better for them to die than to live. Nay, the world swarms with some men, (or monsters rather,) such as Ezekiel speaks of and reproves, as set light by father and mother, such as as soon condescend to relieve a vagrant by the highway-side, as their own father or mother.

“ BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL, AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS.”—PSALM ciii. 2.

Samson had not found his honey, if he had not turned aside to see his lion; and we shall lose the comforts of God’s benefits, if we do not renew our sight of him by meditation. The mercies of God are ill bestowed upon us, if we cannot step aside to view the monuments of his deliverance : dangers may be at once passed and forgotten.

“ HE COMMANDED YOU THAT, IF ANY WOULD NOT WORK, NEITHER SHOULD HE EAT.”—2 TH. iii. 10.

As the bee-master on occasion of want will feed his bees, but never the drones, so true charity relieves those poor men that will labour, but not at all, or rarely, those lazy beggars that will take no pains.

“ ASK NO QUESTIONS FOR CONSCIENCE’ SAKE.”

1 COR. x. 25.

As Samson ate the honey-comb out of a dead beast, and disdained not those sweets because he finds them uncleanly laid, so good may not be refused because the means are accidentally evil: honey is honey still, though in a dead lion. Those are less wise and more scrupulous than Samson, which abhor the graces of God, because they find them in ill-favoured vessels. One cares not for the preacher’s true doctrine, because his mode of preaching that doctrine is peculiar. Another will not take a good receipt from the hand of a physician, because he is given to unlawful studies. A third will not receive deserved contribution from the hands of an usurer. It is a weak neglect not to take the honey because we hate the lion. God’s children have right to, and ought to take, their Father’s blessings wheresoever they find them.

“ THE SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH IN US LUSTETH TO ENVY.”—JAMES iv. 5.

Jonathan out of the honey drew the danger of death,

and we draw evil out of good, and turn the grace of God into wantonness: our wealth and honours make us proud, our favours with great men to disdain our betters, and our powers to oppress the innocent; from the length of days we draw forth a multitude of sins; from beauty lust, and from the abundance of God's mercy, presumptuous perseverance in sin. But as the bee sucks honey out of the henbane, and Samson out of the eater drew forth meat, and out of the strong drew forth sweetness, so God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, did from the death of Christ bring eternal life to as many as believe in him, for he gave his Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“BE PATIENT, BRETHREN, UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD.”—JAMES v. 7.

Bees are the most harmless and laborious, the most orderly and profitable creatures that the world affords, and yet have more adversaries and enemies than almost any other creature, and herein are they emblems of believers, who, though they hurt none profit all, yet are opposed and persecuted by many. Satan (first) like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, and his emissaries, are still compassing sea and land, endeavouring their destruction. If Israel will needs go out of Egypt to serve his God, Pharaoh will be presently up in arms and pursue after him. This

serpent hath a brood of his own bowels, that like the mole, can creep under the earth, and transform themselves into angels of light to perform deeds of darkness, which made Isaiah cry out that he was undone, David, Woe is me. And why? for they dwelt among a people of polluted lives, and that abhorred peace: their throats were an open sepulchre, their tongues like razors, hot as the coals of juniper, the poison of asps under their lips, and their mouth full of cursing and bitterness. And beside these foreign foes, that seem the further from us, there be home-bred and domestical, and therefore more dangerous adversaries:—first, corruption, the old man, that daily sends forth whole swarms of lusts to destroy the new; and secondly, death, the last enemy that is to be destroyed.

“DEMAS HATH FORSAKEN ME, HAVING LOVED THIS PRESENT WORLD.”—2 TIM. iv. 10.

It is a common but fabulous conceit, that bees, once losing their stings, lose their natural diligence and industry, and so become idle and lazy drones. But it is really true of too many men, who sometimes with their faces to Sion-ward make profession of holiness and religion, but fear of the loss of fame, estate, honour, or life, makes them, with Demas and Hymeneus, embrace the world, and make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

“THE SAME DAY, PILATE AND HEROD WERE MADE FRIENDS TOGETHER.”—LUKE xxiii. 12.

The robbing bee and the wasp, though there be between them if not an antipathy, yet certainly a desperate hatred and enmity, will, without strife or difference, concur together to rob a hive of bees deserving ill of neither, but only through paucity and weakness, obnoxious to their insolence and rapine. Do you wonder, then, if men wickedly disposed (though ill-affected each to other) to compass their particular designs, with formalities of concord comply and agree together, as Herod and Pilate were made friends to crucify Christ, to compass the destruction of another, by whose ruin they may greateren and enrich themselves ?

“RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND.”
EPH. iv. 22.

Bees in extremity of winter lie still in a deep (but not dead) sleep, stir not from their places, eat not, make no noise; but on the alteration of the weather, when the sun shineth cheerily on them, then these sleepers awake and revive. Many men finding some change in themselves, because such lusts as have been formerly vigorous and lively are now dull and torpid, they thereupon comfort themselves as if they were dead, whereas they are but covered and laid asleep for a time, and will awake and rise again. As Samson, when he was tied

with cords rose again, and was as strong as ever he was when the opportunity came, and it was told him, "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson ;" so lusts are oft laid asleep till the opportunity comes, when all the threads of good purposes break, and they rise again in their strength ; therefore, if there be not a new creature brought within thy soul, thy lusts are but asleep, they will rise again.

"THE FIRST MAN IS OF THE EARTH, EARTHY."

1 COR. xv. 47.

"Tis not the wax, but the impression of the seal, that fortifies a conveyance and makes the deed. And temptation, however in itself it be less than the fact, yet, considered in the author that invites sin by these opportunities, doth far outgo it. The infirmity of a sinner may sometimes find excuse or pity, but what shadow of excuse can shelter his malice, that drew him to the act ? Man is a thing easily persuaded to error ; *Cereus in vitium flecti*,—like wax wrought to a softness, that will receive the figure of any vice. And yet we blame not his softness, but lament him whose credulity and easy temper betrays him to every temptation. If we lay the occasion of man's fault aright, we must lay it on the tempter. At his allurements did Adam's obedience relent ; his persuasions heated him with the inordinate desire of knowledge : he chafed this wax, mollifying it with such art that it received

his authentical seal of damnation, by which sin was made current in the world.

“ MY PRAYER RETURNED TO MY OWN BOSOM.”

PSALM XXXV. 13.

A man finds God in his word as he seeks him by prayer, and no otherwise : wax receives impression as it is prepared.

“ THE TONGUE IS A FIRE, A WORLD OF INIQUITY.”

JAMES iii. 6.

If bees be once provoked they are fiery and furious, violent and virulent, though to their own ruin and destruction implacable and unappeasable with opposition and resistance. And such is the impatient man ; he hath his spirit set on fire of hell, he hath a short possession, he is a madman for so many years, that will not stick at any thing that the devil and depraved nature bids him do ; he will fly in the face of servants, children, wife, magistrate, or even his God ; his heart brings forth sin by troops.

“ BE YE HOLY, FOR I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD.”

LEV. XX. 7.

Bees will not admit of strangers into their society, except they come with submission and resolution to live under their leader, and assimilate themselves to their manners, without any after-commerce or fellowship with the hives from whence they de-

parted. And God receives none under the tuition of his love and favour, but such as are wholly emancipated from the world, and with full purpose of heart give up themselves to be guided by him, without having any further fellowship with their former works and companions of darkness. Heaven is bestowed upon none but upon such who are thus both willing and capable: holiness makes capacity of happiness.

“EVERY MAN THAT STRIVETH FOR THE MASTERY IS TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS.”—1 COR. ix. 25.

Bees are contented with a simple food procured by their own industry, of which they feed sparingly but work laboriously and diligently; whereas the drones work not at all, but liberally fill themselves, and that daily, with the purest honey, and to sharpen their stomachs take many a vagary in the heat of the day with a loud buzzing, as if they were acting somewhat to purpose; but it is only to empty their bodies and quicken their appetite, whereby they often grow unwieldy, and after a while (though the bees let them alone) cannot return back again into the hive. And are not many reasonable men defective in their imitation of the unreasonable bees, who frequently eat to surfeiting and drink to drunkenness, and exceed the limits of temperance in the use of the creatures, denying themselves no pleasing nor desirable thing, that so they might prevent such evils, as admitting these

exorbitances will bring inevitable mischief upon them, but drone-like live idly and intemperately, not considering the apostle's exhortation, "Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour?" As if he should have said, You are all in a warfaring condition in the field, with an adversary, and he no simple one, but a lion, a roaring lion, a diligent adversary, who is always going about seeking whom he may devour, drawing into sin, for he hath no way to devour men by but that. Therefore do you as soldiers in the field with an enemy would do ; they ply not their bellies, but use their meat and drink and sleep very sparingly, because though this be not enough to prevent the mischief that is intended them by their enemies, yet it is one very good means of their safety, for it preventeth a sudden surprisal, and enableth them to make resistance ; and so would a moderate use of meat, drink, pleasure, &c., keep you waking, and give you liberty to prepare for all encounters with the devil.

"THE SHIELD OF FAITH, WHEREBY YE SHALL BE ABLE TO QUENCH ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED ONE."—EPH. vi. 16.

As the humming bee having lost her sting in another, doth still notwithstanding make a fearful and grievous noise by her often buzzing about us, but is nothing able to hurt us, so sin and death

having lost their sting in Christ Jesus, do not cease at all, even in the height of the parching heat of our consciences, to make a murmuring, and with furious storms of temptations to terrify us and our consciences: albeit they can never sting us.

“ O TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD.”

PSALM XXXIV. 8.

A man by discourse can never possibly persuade another of the sweetness of honey so fully as if he himself did taste it. And it cannot be told how sweet a thing grace is:—do but try and you shall soon perceive a difference between it and all outward comforts; therefore come and taste, saith the prophet, how good the Lord is.

“ BE CONTENT WITH SUCH THINGS AS YE HAVE.”

HEB. xiii. 5.

Bees, though many times they have sufficiently stored and replenished their hives, yea sometimes to a superabundant redundancy, hindering for want of empty cells the future generation, and so suffer because of their plenty, yet will they not give over working; nay, some not leave robbing, and that from the weaker and wanting hives. Have we not here a fair picture of a covetous man, who is never at rest, never satisfied and contented?

“ I HAVE CHOSEN THEE IN THE FURNACE OF AFFLICTION.”—ISA. xlvi. 10.

The bee, a nice and dainty creature, builds her

cells sometimes in an unsavoury carcase, and the carcase that promiseth nothing but stench and annoyance, now offers comfort and refreshing, and in a sort, pays Samson for the wrong offered. O the wonderful goodness of our God, that can change terrors into pleasures, and can make the greatest evils beneficial ! Is any man under his humiliation, under the hand of God, grown more faithful and consonable, there is honey out of the lion. Is any man by his temptation or fall become more circumspect, there is honey also out of the lion : there is no Samson to whom every lion doth not yield honey. Every Christian is the better for his evils, yea, Satan himself in his exercising of God's children advantageth them.

“ **MY SIN IS EVER BEFORE ME.**”—PSALM li. 3.

If robbing bees charge a neighbour hive and find a resolute opposition, with the slaughter and destruction of the prime leaders and forward invaders. the scattered residue will be timorous and fearful to re-attempt, or if at all but faintly, and quickly sound a final retreat. And he that hath felt the sting of sin in his conscience, and been formerly confounded with the shame thereof, dreadeth and fleeth, and seeketh by all means to shun those sins which have left so sad a remembrance behind them ; for the smart of the wound of conscience for sin past is a special means, through grace, to keep us from sin to come. For, as Lactantius writeth,

The ashes of a burnt viper are a present remedy against the sting of the viper ; so the remains of sin in the conscience, viz. remorse and shame, are at present a remedy against sin, as we may see in David : “ I know mine own iniquity, and my sin is ever before me.”

“ PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER, THAT YE MAY BE HEALED.”—JAMES v. 16.

Bees are very little creatures and their sting is very small, not visible except it be very near, and yet this sting affects with grievous smarting pain. And if the sting of a bee swell and rankle and smart so much, what will the teeth of the adder, or the tail of the scorpion ? If those little sins that are so small that we can scarce discern them to be sins, put the conscience to so much pain and anguish, what will great sins do ? If whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment ; and whosoever shall say unto his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council ; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire, what punishment is he like to endure, who beareth malice in his heart against his brother, enviieth his prosperity, undermineth his estate, woundeth his good name, nay, spilleth his blood ? This is a crimson sin, and mortal in a double sense ; not only because it slayeth the soul, but also because it killeth the body.

“ AS MANY AS I LOVE I REBUKE AND CHASTEN.”
REV. iii. 19.

Plutarch writeth, that though thyme be a most dry and bitter herb, yet that not only the apothecaries draw an wholesome oil out of it, but also that the bees extract from thence sweet honey. Affliction is this dry and bitter herb to the taste of most men, yet out of it men may draw both a wholesome oil to cure a wounded conscience, and honey also to delight the spiritual taste—oil out of the nature of afflictions, which are chastenings, and honey out of the cause, God’s love.

“ THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MERCHANT-MAN, SEEKING GOODLY PEARLS.”—MAT. xiii. 45.

If you do but take any piece of God’s word, and do but stay upon it as the bee doth on the flower, and will not off till you have got somewhat out of it—if you be still digging in this mine, this will make you rich in knowledge, and if you be rich in knowledge it will make you rich in grace.

“ IS THERE INIQUITY IN MY TONGUE? CANNOT MY TASTE DISCERN PERVERSE THINGS?”—JOB vi. 30.

The word of God, saith the prophet, is good, yea, and pleasant too, to every one that walketh uprightly, as sweet as honey, yea, sweeter than the

purest honey to such, as David professeth of himself. But even honey itself, though of itself good and pleasant, and wholesome and medicinal, yet causeth pain and smart to an exulcerate part. And children, therefore, that at other times much desire and cry for it, yet will not endure to have it come near their lips when they have sore mouths. It is man's love of his own corruption and impatience of cure, that maketh the word of God harsh and unpleasant unto any.

“**SUBMIT YOURSELF TO EVERY ORDINANCE OF MAN FOR THE LORD'S SAKE.**”—1 PETER ii. 13.

Look upon the silly bees, the best emblems of obedient creatures; painful in their labour, dutiful in their life: their queen being safe they are at unity; so long as their queen is well, they follow their work, but being dead, they leave and loathe their honey-combs. Behold how nature hath stamped obedience by instinct to bees, to be subject to a superior in their kind; how much more should nature, reason, and grace, stamp obedience in the hearts of Christians, knowing that without a government kingdoms and states are thraldoms? *Remota justitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia,* Take away justice, and what are kingdoms but dens of thieves? Take away obedience to government, and that were *miscere terris tartara*, make earth and hell all one, except only in name.

“ HE THAT ENDURETH TO THE END SHALL BE SAVED.”—MAT. x. 22.

Bees will not be forced to communion with others, except they voluntarily forsake their own hives in a swarm; for take them at other times, as when they lie out and sweep them into another hive, yet they will (at furthest) the day following all return back to their own and proper hive. It is with them as with a stream that hath made itself a channel wherein to run:—it may indeed by a strong hand be turned out of its course, but yet it will be still bending towards its own way, and never leave working and winding till it be where it was before; so, howsoever the upright person may be unsettled for a time and put beside his course, yet he strives and labours to be where he should be, and never finds himself well till he be in his first path. Like the needle in the compass, though it be jogged aside for a season, yet it makes towards the north again, and is in a perpetual trepidation till it be where it should; so the children of God, though they be subject to manifold declensions, manifold desertions, manifold stops and stays in their course to heaven, yet still set their faces thitherward; though the wind may sometimes violently carry them beside the way, yet it doth not dismay them, nor do they find any rest or content in their souls till they be in their right course again.

“LOVE AS BRETHREN, BE PITIFUL, BE COURTEOUS.”

1 PETER iii. 8.

Bees, of all politic creatures, most unanimously comply and combine together, live and love together, mutually protect and provide for one another, always agree among themselves, and act and work all for the public good and welfare of the whole body; they (as it were) throw down all enclosures, lay all in common, not selfish, look not to their own things but on the things of others, tendering their well-doing as their own, neither are they apt to give offence carelessly, nor to take it causelessly. And shall men, shall Christians, be so unnatural as to inveigh one against another, to entrap one another, to defame, disgrace, and devour one another, *tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ?* As he said in another cause, This is all one as for one eye to pull out another, one hand to cut off another: know we not that perfection and safety depend in union, as on the other side danger and destruction inevitably follow on distraction? Union, like the wise woman, Solomon speaks, buildeth up the house, but division, as the foolish woman, pulleth it down with her hands.

“A LITTLE THAT A RIGHTEOUS MAN HATH IS BETTER THAN THE RICHES OF MANY WICKED.”—PSALM xxxvii. 16.

The Israelites coming into a wood where they saw the honey dropping, and found the meat as ready as their appetite, yet dare not touch the

sustenance, and will rather endure famine and fainting than an indiscreet curse. So the truly righteous, though great temporal advantages present themselves with the breach of God's law, yet rather choose a contented poverty, than riches with the appurtenances of everlasting sorrow.

“ AS THE SMALL RAIN UPON THE TENDER HERB.”

DEUT. xxxii. 2.

“ Thy lips, my spouse, drop as the honey-comb ; honey and milk are under thy tongue.” He commends the spouse for her lips and her tongue. Now her lips are the preachers and doctors, and other teachers of the church, who ought to be a honey-comb to their people with the sweetness of love, and distilling with gentleness and affability. The law of Moses had bitterness, for it required eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Again, though the lips of Moses were a honey-comb, yet not dropping, but dry, and stony, and mysterious ; that is, in stony tables, where in truth the secret of the divine law was hidden, so that he made him to suck honey out of the rock. But now the lips of the church drop as a honey-comb ; a honey-comb is honey in the wax, that is, the divinity in the humanity. Or, by honey-comb is understood the secret of divine wisdom, which is melted from the lips of the church ; whence it follows, Honey and milk are under thy tongue. By tongue is to be understood the same with the lips ; by honey is signified the instruction

of the perfect ; but by milk teaching of the simple. The apostle had honey under his tongue when he said, As unto babes in Christ, I have fed you with milk. A honey-comb dropping, not dilated and spread abroad ; for the words of doctors or preachers ought to drop according to the capacity of the hearer, and not to be poured out all at once, so that the hearers cannot lap it up.

“ FOOLS HATE KNOWLEDGE.”—PROV. i. 22.

A wise soul in his thought-work is as a bee-hive ; all the powers are in labour, and continually going out and returning ; no power idle, and none return empty, and all their observations as honey laid up for use : it gathereth and digesteth in itself a substance and mass of purified knowledge, and that for affection and action, and all of them for the obedience of God and union with him.

“ SO RUN THAT YE MAY OBTAIN.”—1 COR. ix. 24.

Bees are not only laborious when they are in want, and their provision small, but when they are largely supplied they are as earnestly bent on their gathering as if they had nothing. Believers are not to stint their endeavours when they have attained to a competency of knowledge, but to go on still forward and grow, for though they have enough to make them thankful, yet never enough to make remiss and negligent ; they must still press forwards like runners in a race, and look not how much they have run but how much remains. Let it always dis-

please thee to continue as thou art, if thou meanest to arrive where thou art not.

“ ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM.”

EPH. iv. 5.

Bees have a common house, a common care of posterity, common labour, common food, common generation, a common use and fruition of all things, and therefore entirely and cordially love one another. If one be wronged they will all, though with the loss of their own lives, vindicate the injury and vanquish the adversary. And shall not professors of the same religion, who are in so near a relation one to another, be tenderly affected one to another, and love one another? They have the same God for their father, the same church for their mother, Christ their elder brother, are begotten of the same immortal seed, nourished with the same milk of the word, eat the same bread of the sacraments, and look for the same blessed inheritance, and therefore must needs, by the teaching and work of the Spirit, love one another heartily and mutually.

“ HE THAT FORMED THE EYE, SHALL HE NOT SEE?”

PSALM xciv. 9.

There is something of God in every creature: this makes the meditation of the creature to be useful. There is none, even the meanest (much more the bee), but it hath a being, and thereby in a

sort sets out the goodness of God. God likens himself to many, to show that there is something of him in these, and therefore to teach us to rise from them to him, in whom all the excellencies that are scattered in them are united. In innocency we knew God, and in him we had knowledge of the creature, but now we are fain to help ourselves from the knowledge of the creature, to rise to the knowledge of God.

“A SOFT ANSWER TURNETH AWAY WRATH.”

PROV. xv. 1.

Bees provoked near the hive will be very troublesome, and according to their power, dangerous; striving, striking, or contending, further exasperates, but yielding or giving place pacifies them. And if we aim at peace with men in case of controversy with another, let us apply ourselves to a cool language, speak softly, speak wisely, speak silently, and in secret; this will cool the great heat of another, and disarm him of his excessive indignation. Hard to hard will never yield, but lay hard to soft and you may break even a flint upon a bed or cushion, which cannot be done by laying one flint upon another. So let a man's heart be never so hard and obdurate, if we use soft words to him, give him mild speeches, he cannot but be mollified and melted towards us: in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head, which shall melt and soften him.

“ THEY HAVE A ZEAL OF GOD, BUT NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE.”—ROM. X. 2.

Bees, though they be engaged in a hot and mortal skirmish with other insects, yet ordinarily use not their stings, but wreak their spite with biting and breaking off their enemies' legs; but when they are transported with rage and blinded with passion, then they sting; but always with their own certain ruin and destruction. And not less prejudicial is the fire or passion of zeal to professors and the church of God, where it wants knowledge to direct it. What Isocrates spake sometimes of valour or strength, is as true of zeal, viz., that zeal and resolution with wisdom doth much good, but without it, it doth much mischief to ourselves and other; like grenades and other fire-works, which, if they be not well looked to and ordered, they break and do more hurt to them that cast them, than to the enemy. No man can be ignorant of the direful effects of blind zeal: when an unskilful Phaeton takes upon him to drive the chariot of the sun, he sets the whole world in a combustion. What a mettled horse is without a bridle, or a hot-spurred rider without an eye, or a ship in a high wind and swelling sail without a rudder,—that is zeal without knowledge, which is like the eye in the rider to choose the way, or like the bridle in the hand to moderate the pace, or like the rudder in the ship to steer safely the course thereof. St.

Bernard hits full on this point: Discretion without zeal is slow-paced, and zeal without discretion is heady; let therefore zeal spur on discretion, and discretion rein in zeal.

“LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE.”—HEB. xiii. 1.

Bees of the same hive live together with the greatest love and agreement that can be conceived, never contending, never quarrelling: whereas sheep of the same fold when they are wanton will dash one against another, and almost break one another’s heads; yea, men that live in the same house, of the same family, will jar and jangle, yea, children that tumbled in the same belly for very trifles sometimes will fall out and fight one with another. Nay, true Christians (with shame and grief be it published) though they will not persecute the cause of religion, yet will molest and disquiet their fellows, through passion, pride, self-love, and other corruptions drawing them thereunto.

“PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.”—1 THESS. v. 17.

Wax must be chafed and tempered between your fingers if you mean to set an impression upon it, and if you continue not to temper it, it will be hard again nevertheless. And so it is with our hearts; therefore use the means of grace constantly, do it day by day, estrange not yourselves from God by intermission of holy duties.

“ I WILL CAUSE BREATH TO ENTER INTO YOU, AND
YE SHALL LIVE.”—EZEK. xxxvii. 5.

Hardness is not intrinsical to wax ; with warmth there is a natural tendency to softness. Let it be hardened through cold, yet bring it to the fire, or let the sun smile awhile upon it with its beams and warmth, and it will relent, and, if the heat be strong, return to its liquid nature. But now it is far otherwise with a stone, for let the sun shine never so hot upon it, lay it by the fire, it melts not, it yields not ; nay, it is rather made the harder. The wicked man hath the hardness of a stone : let him enjoy never so many mercies, he is not a whit moved the more to amend his life ; let God speak to him, let him smile upon him, all is one to him ; nay, he grows every day under the best means more hard and impenitent. Contrarily, the faithful Christian, however by sin he may for a time contract hardness, yet bring him to the word and ordinances awhile, let God shine upon him with the light of his countenance, and he will resolve presently and recover his former tenderness.

“ I WILL TAKE HEED TO MY WAYS.”—PSAL. xxxix. 1.

Bees are frequently endangered by spiders who weave their cobwebs near the flowers where they use to gather, and also just over their passage out of their hives, and so at their going forth, but especially at their return home laden and weary,”

make a prey of them. And earthly things prove snares to many, because of their daily presence. "In the way wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me," saith the Psalmist; and in the way and places wherein we are daily walking and travelling do these baits lie; they are the things which we continually look upon, hear of, handle, taste, feel; and therefore, as those snares which are laid for the bird in the place where it is frequently hopping up and down do much endanger it, so those necessary evils which therefore we live among, and make continual use of, because they are necessary, do the more strongly allure us unto danger, because they are always before us.

"HE THAT SOWETH INIQUITY SHALL REAP VANITY."

PROV. xxii. 8.

Lusts ever bring inconstancy with them, and make the soul like weary and distempered bodies, never well in any posture or condition. Wicked men fly like bees from one flower to another, from one vanity to another, and can never find enough to satiate the endless intemperancy of unnatural desires; only the gospel, being spiritually apprehended, hath treasures enough for the soul to rest on, and to seek no further.

"ALL THEIR THOUGHTS ARE FOR EVIL."

PSALM lvi. 5.

A bee, when she hath once stung, can sting no more, yet will testify an angry disposition by loud

buzzings and frequent strikings at the face of the party (stung before), sometimes to his trouble and perhaps to his fear, also being already sensible of his present smart, and suspecting further danger. So many foward men when they have to their utmost injured others, and intended more, but when their causes are tried and prove desperate in right, they will yet still create perverse matters to molest their neighbours, and the more they sink in the main of their intendment, the more impetuously will they seek to perplex and trouble them.

“ WITH LOVING-KINDNESS HAVE I DRAWN THEE.”
JER. xxxi. 3.

There is a magnetical, attractive force in the queen bee; so that what the loadstone is to the iron, is she to the rest of the bees, and therefore, wheresoever she is, will they be also. And no less attractive and powerful is Christ’s love in us: our hearts are heavy and downwards of themselves, but his love draws us upwards and makes us heavenly-minded; it makes us desire further and further communion with him: still there is a magnetical, attractive force in Christ’s love; wheresoever it is, it draws the heart and affections after it.

“ FEED ME WITH FOOD CONVENIENT FOR ME.”
PROV. xxx. 8.

Wasps and hornets feed on flesh, carrion, dead bees, flies, almost any thing; but the bee is a neat

and curious feeder; she sucks and extracts the quintessence of flowers, which she chemically distils in the alembic of her belly; and thus prepared lays it up for future food. So the Christian soul in this respect is a bee, that will not feed on worldly carrion or sinful pleasure, but on Christ and spiritual things. The soul of a carnal and natural man useth to feed upon dust, carrion, earth, and earthly things, when the soul of a true Christian, that hath the taste of grace, feeds neatly, it will not feed on that which is base and earthy, but upon heaven and spiritual things. The perpetual everlasting intercourse between Christ and a Christian is his main happiness here, and his eternal happiness in heaven.

“THE GOD OF PEACE SHALL BRUISE SATAN UNDER YOUR FEET.”—ROM. xvi. 20.

Temptations to sin come about us like bees, buzzing into our minds evil thoughts, and preparing to sting by drawing us into consent; but it is in the name and by the power of the Lord that we do destroy them. If Satan be trodden down, it is God that doth it for us.

“ESCHEW EVIL, AND DO GOOD.”—1 PET. iii. 11.

Whosoever dallies or plays with the bees at the hive’s mouth, doth it with his own peril; for although at first he be perhaps neglected or assaulted but with one or two, yet if he persists in his folly or

fool-hardiness, he shall quickly find more fists about his ears than his own, and not escape scot-free. Would we not be overcome and foiled by temptations, conjure them not up, dally not with them; but if they be risen, quickly lay them, stifle them in their birth, and they will expose us to no further trouble or danger. Though flax, saith one, be never so catching, a spark of fire may fall in and yet not inflame, if it be espied and taken out suddenly, ere it have time to insinuate its force into the combustible matter; and so evil motions, if quenched at the first kindling, seldom break out into a flame of rebellion. But if we neglect them, bid them welcome, parley with them, or please ourselves in them (though with no intent to commit sin), lust will *incalescere*, wax hot, and conceive; and then the next thing we are like to hear of, will be the birth of some foul sin or other.

“ LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLO-
RIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.”—
MAT. v. 16.

There is a kind of life in the worm (the first but imperfect birth of a bee), but yet neither seeing nor hearing, nor locomotive faculty: though it stirs in its cell and receives the food that is brought to it, yet can it do nothing for its benefit or defence, or others' pleasure or profit. And as life is thus shut up in this imperfect creature, till by a further

birth and transmutation it receives a new and better life; so is the light in a natural man shut up before regeneration—all the light they have doth but glow in their breast, showing itself there (as a late reverend divine), and making it evident that they have such knowledge, but it is not a candle that enlightens all the room, that enlightens all the corners of the soul. Take the light of a star in a dark night and compare it with the light of the sun, though never so little; look in what measure it appears—it scatters the darkness from east to west. So there is a light in the minds of carnal men, which is but as a star in a dark night, which doth not take away the darkness; but in the regenerate it is a sanctified light, like the light of the sun, not shut within a narrow compass, but spreading itself unto all the parts of the soul; or as if a candle be brought into a dark room, it lightens all the house, but if it be a spark of fire it shows itself, and glows and doth no more: it doth not enlighten the house.

“ WHO HATH KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD ?”
ROM. xi. 34.

Many things in the nature of bees, when we have most studiously enquired after them, can we not find out and certainly resolve and determine of; as concerning their manner of generation, the duration and continuance of the queen bee, with their methods and orders in sending their first swarm:

yet do we, where we are unable to find out certain grounds conclude all to be done discreetly and orderly, wisely and wonderfully. And shall we not suspect and check our shallow conceit and judgment, when it carries us to question and reason about God's providence, about divers things below, and not scruple our wisdom, when we cannot see the causes of things and God's course in disposing of them, when he deals diversely, and not as we would think in our reason, yea, and ceasing from our wisdom to search into things more than we can comprehend. If in finite and small creatures we poor mortals are often nonplussed and at a stand, let us not be too busy to know the reason of his counsels and doings, but ascribe all to his infinite wisdom.

“I WENT DOWN TO THE BOTTOMS OF THE MOUNTAINS; THE EARTH WITH HER BARS WAS ABOUT ME FOR EVER: YET HAST THOU BROUGHT UP MY LIFE FROM CORRUPTION, O LORD MY GOD.”—JONAH ii. 6.

God exhibits evident tokens of his goodness to all men, even then when they are afflicted with divers and sundry calamities, that when others like drones do gather honey but from the hive, a true believer should gather it even from thistles; and when weaker vessels bear sail only in a calm, a true vessel of Christ should sail best to his wished port in a storm.

“ WHETHER IT BE GOOD OR EVIL, WE WILL OBEY THE VOICE OF THE LORD.”—JER. xlii. 6.

God never suffereth evil but for some great and secret good; as Moses saith, “ He caused him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the hardest stone.” Oh the infinite wisdom and power of God! Out of the dry and ragged rock of our sins he draweth the sweet sap of humility from us, and of mercy from himself, to the sweet safety and felicity of our souls.

“ RICHES CERTAINLY MAKE THEMSELVES WINGS.”
PROV. xxiii. 5.

Riches cannot make men happy by their own nature; not only because they are unsatisfactory, deceitful, and inconstant, but because in the indisposition in ourselves; they are like the eating of honey to assuage the boiling of a choleric stomach, a little pleasing to the taste, but much increasing both the pain and danger of the disease.

“ IT BECAME HIM, FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, IN BRINGING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, TO MAKE THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING.”—HEB. ii. 10.

When a bee has once lost her sting, she may trouble awhile with her buzzing and violent striking, but can do no further hurt; so afflictions and

troubles whose sting is pulled out in the things that Christ suffered in being conqueror for the elect ; I say the sting of harm is taken out of the crosses that God sendeth for the humbling of his children or church. And they are sent to fear them, not to destroy them, as the destructions that come on the ungodly with their sting in them.

“ OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN.”

PHIL. iii. 20.

Set your mind and thoughts on heavenly things, which are able to satisfy you ; else like the bee you will fly from place to place, because earthly things do not satisfy you.

“ DEMAS HATH FORSAKEN ME, HAVING LOVED THIS PRESENT WORLD.”—2 TIM. iv. 10.

Most men will commend the bee when they feed of her honey, and perhaps with some cost and trouble seek her preservation ; but if she once cause a little smart with her sting, then they are quickly out of patience, and exclaim as much against her, and will be at no further pains and cost for her safety. So many men will be content to serve God, as long as they may withal advantage themselves : but to serve him and deny themselves is a work which they have not learned. Ephraim loveth to tread out the corn, saith the prophet : you know the mouth of the ox was not to be muzzled that

trod out the corn : he had his work and reward together.

“ SIMON, SATAN HATH DESIRED TO HAVE YOU.”

LUKE xxii. 31.

When honey is expressed from the combs, if there be any corruption or dross in it, that will quickly, being lightest, ascend uppermost, but the purest honey will sink unseen to the bottom. So when Satan disquiets the heart, that which is purest and should most comfort will sink and be out of sight, but our sins and corruptions will ever be before our faces.

“ BY HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED.”

ISA. liii. 5.

The industrious bee is diligent to gather honey, and when she hath filled her hive, is chased out of it and her life ofttimes by fire and smoke, that the profit may be ours ; so that the pains and labour are only hers, but the advantage and profit are ours. And the pains of Christ’s wound were his, but the benefit ours ; the holes in his hands and side were his, but the honey which issued out was ours ; in one word, the price which he paid was his, but the inheritance which he purchased was ours ; he alone without any demerit of his suffered our punishment, that we without merit of ours might obtain his grace.

“ WHATSOEVER THY HAND FINDETH TO DO, DO IT WITH THY MIGHT; FOR THERE IS NO WORK, NOR DEVICE, NOR KNOWLEDGE, NOR WISDOM, IN THE GRAVE, WHITHER THOU GOEST.”—ECCLES. ix. 10.

Bees diligently apply themselves to their work early and late, neglecting no occasion; they are exceeding intent upon it, much taken with it, and almost overwhelmed in their eager and delightful pains, and that all the time the season continueth; for storms and rainy weather may come, and then they will be necessitated to lie still, or winter will come, and then there is nothing to be gotten, and if they have not sufficiently before-hand provided and furnished themselves, they must needs starve and die. And shall not men do good and get good, while they have liberty and opportunity, even give themselves up unto it, and that with all their might? Many a Christian is kept from doing good by restraint, by sickness, by worldliness, by business, by an unwilling and hard heart; howsoever, by death, when the winter, when night comes, there is no more working. How doleful will the prison, sickness, and death be, when conscience shall pinch us for our liberty, health, and life abused! We may therefore justly use the wise man’s argument, “ Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all speed, because there is no knowledge, wisdom, nor invention in the grave whither thou

goest." But here is that which addeth weight unto it—before we come unto the grave we may come into this or that strait, that shall disable us almost as much as our grave. And therefore, while we have any ability or opportunity in any kind to glorify God, let us not be negligent, but say with the Psalmist, "As long as I have any breath I will praise the Lord." And with that valiant captain that defended his ship with his left hand when his right hand was cut off, and with his teeth when his left hand was gone; if we are disabled one way for doing good, let us try what we can do another, if by our tongues, our pens, our hands, our gestures:

"IF I PERISH, I PERISH."—ESTHER iv. 16.

A young queen-bee, in the departure of the last colony, sometimes steals forth with her that is designed leader, because in her present state (by staying behind) she is sure to perish. In her going forth there is room for hope, and possibility of life if she can attain the throne. Believers that have been formerly reduced unto extremities and impossibilities within themselves, looking upon God as omnipotent, and so able to save; as merciful, and in Christ reconcilable, and so likely to save if he be sought unto: resolve as the lepers in the famine of Samaria, not to continue in the state they are in, nor yet to return to the city to their wonted haunts and ways, where they shall be sure to perish, and in the latter is a possibility not to

perish. Therefore take up a conclusive purpose to trust Christ, and if I must perish yet he shall reject me: I will not reject myself; I will go unto him.

“AND THEY THAT ARE CHRIST’S HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH THE AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS.”
GAL. v. 24.

If our lips drop honey by the preaching of God’s word, and the sweetness of his doctrine, it is good and commendable; but if our hands drop myrrh by the crucifying of sin, and the mortification of our earthly members to the obedience of Christ, and the perfect imitation of Christian holiness, it is most comfortable and heavenly.

“LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH, AND THE MEDITATION OF MY HEART, BE ACCEPTABLE IN THY SIGHT, O LORD.”—PSALM xix. 14.

As the witty bees when they go about to fill their combs with sweet honey, suck first upon the sweetest flowers of the fields and gardens, and then carry the sweet juice into their hives, so ought believers, before they enter on their prayers, to fix their cogitations upon the two sweet flowers of power and love which they find in the name of the Father, and then carry the pure juice of them into the inward hives of their souls and consciences, and so shall they make a most precious honeycomb of all spiritual devotion.

“ HE HATH GIVEN US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.”—2 COR. v. 18.

“ I eat my honey-comb with my honey.” Hereby is understood that peace which our Saviour hath made betwixt our Saviour and us. The sin of Adam and Eve in paradise made the breach between God and mankind ; the death of Christ made the atonement and reconciliation. “ When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” As then Samson in his riddle said unto his companions, “ Out of the eater came meat, and out of the strong one came sweetness ;” which was meant of a dead lion, in whose belly bees had hived and made honey ;—so I may say of Christ, for he was the lion of the tribe of Judah, and from him, being crucified for our sins and slain for our redemption, we receive our honey and our honey-comb ; that is to say, peace with God the Father. But for the honey-comb, why should Christ eat it ? Wolves are very hungry that will not leave the bones till the morrow : and so is Christ ; though he be not a wolf, yet he is a lamb that is both hungry and thirsty till he have taken away the sins of the world ; and therefore he eats his honey-comb with his honey, so greedy is he to cancel the handwriting which was against us, so desirous of our peace and reconciliation.

“ O THAT I HAD WINGS LIKE A DOVE ! FOR THEN
WOULD I FLY AWAY AND BE AT REST.”—
PSALM lv. 6.

Believers must not fly low and close to the ground, like bees against a storm, but raise their flight to a high pitch, even as high as the Most High, as did Moses when he saw Him who is invisible ; for *mens, quavis ave levior, cum Deus pen-
nas aptarit, prætervolat montes*, saith Chrysostom. The soul, when God hath furnished her with wings, flies higher than any bird over the highest mountains ; and so (as the same father saith elsewhere) as God is said to be in heaven, and yet is also here on earth, so we that are here on earth are yet also in heaven.

“ DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.”
1 COR. xv. 54.

As honey is not truly honey when it hath lost its sweetness, no more is the death of the righteous truly death, having lost its bitterness, and fearfulness, and terrors in the godly.

“ BE COURTEOUS.”—1 PETER iii. 8.

The bee for her honey pleaseth many, but for the sting displeaseth not a few : so mildness hath bent, where severity could not break.

“ THE NATURAL MAN RECEIVETH NOT THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.”—1 COR. ii. 14.

As one will know more of the sweetness of honey by one taste of it than by a hundred disputationes and discourses of it, so to speak of spiritual joys to such as have not felt them is ridiculous, because they are known by apprehension, not by discourse ; and to them who have felt them it is needless to discourse of them, for this doctrine is better known by one experience than by a hundred rules.

“ IT IS SOWN A NATURAL BODY ; IT IS RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY.”—1 COR. xv. 44.

Mors is *morsus*, death is but a biting, not a consuming and utter devouring. As he that biteth taketh some and leaveth some, so death getteth a morsel of flesh as the kite taketh garbage from the dunghill, and the dogs offal from the shambles, but the soul it meddleth not with. I cannot therefore better compare the grave than to the honey-comb, where is both honey and wax. The honey of the soul is taken out, the wax of the flesh remaineth behind till the resurrection of just men.

“ MY SON, GIVE ME THINE HEART.”
PROV. xxiii. 26.

God’s law, saith David, “ is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb ;” the meaning whereof is, we must not be mercenary in his service, but the pleasure we take in it must be the cause why we enter-

tain it; therefore it is not without a cause that God requires the heart, yet he will have it seasoned with love. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart:” and “love is the fulfilling of the law.”

“THE TESTIMONY OF OUR CONSCIENCE.”

2 COR. i. 12.

He that will have a good conscience, that shall give in good evidence for him and pronounce a comfortable sentence on him, must believe well and live well; faith doth purify the heart, and a good life beareth the fruit that aboundeth to our reckoning, when we judge our own souls. But a man must not look to have this blessing of a good conscience suddenly: *Vade ad formicam, piger*; some read it, *Vade ad apem*, Go to the bee, O sluggard: she gathereth her food in summer, whereof she maketh use in winter. God’s bee, that is, a man that will have such a good conscience, riseth early, hasteth to the church, hears often, prays often, meditates often, and so doth acquire this absolving conscience. *Colligentem in æstate videre potes, comedentem in hieme videre non potes*; the outward means which he useth are visible, but the inward, which when time serveth he reapeth, are invisible.

“DRUNKARDS SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”—1 COR. vi. 10.

Bees sometimes sting, but ordinarily without any great or long prejudice. The danger is nothing in

comparison of the biting of an adder, which is even unto death—death speedy, death painful and woeful, and that as naturally and as inevitably as opium procureth sleep, or hellebore purgeth, or any poison killeth. So, though every sin (unrepented) hath wrath and judgment following of it hard at the heels, yet some sins are more pernicious. Woe and alas, sorrow and strife, shame, poverty, and diseases are enough, as Solomon notes, to make drunkenness odious; but because (as he observed) drunkards are men past shame and grace, senseless of blows, and therefore much more of reasons and words, being bewitched and besotted with the love of wine, will easily oversee and overleap these petty woes; therefore Solomon sets before their eyes the direful end and fruit, the black and poison-
ful tangle of this sin; “In the end it stingeth like a serpent, it biteth like an adder;” if once a custom, ever a necessity. Wine takes away the heart and spoils the brain, overthrows the faculties and organs of repentance and resolution. And it is just with God, that he that will put out his natural light should have his spiritual extinguished—he that will deprive himself of reason, should lose also the guide and pilot of reason, God’s Spirit and grace.

“TRIBULATION WORKETH PATIENCE.”—Ro. v. 3.

Bees, howsoever some conceit to the contrary, are much advanced and advantaged by the winter. There is thereby not only a preparing of the earth

for a vigorous production of flowers, but a long rest and sleep doth strongly dispose and fit them both for breeding and also honey-gathering. Whereas we may observe, especially in dry seasons, though the weather be very fair and there be some flowers, yet are they not very beneficial. And it is needful for Christians to find the presence of Christ in the way of humiliation and debasement, causing us to afflict our own souls, as to feel his presence joy and comfort. In this life we cannot be without this gracious dispensation. We may therefore comfort ourselves, that howsoever Christ leaves us, yet he will always leave somewhat behind him : as he left myrrh after him upon the handle of the door, some myrrh is left always behind upon the soul, which keeps it in a frame and state of grace and sweetness. Myrrh was, and is, one of the ingredients in the holy oil ; and so this leaving of myrrh behind him, signifies the oil of grace left upon the soul, that enabled the church to do all those things which are spoken of in Cant. v. 6.

“THE LORD IS SLOW TO ANGER AND PLENTEOUS IN MERCY.”—PSALM ciii. 8.

Mercy comes naturally from God like honey from the bee ; but justice like the sting, only when she is provoked.

“BEING DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.”—ROM. vi. 11.

Bees in their first being (while worms) are in-

capable of any excellency, of any ability to profit themselves or others ; yet they must for a time abide in it, and then they must die that they may be changed, and so become agile, able, useful creatures. As they which dye cloth do not immediately change one contrary into another, but first turn a white into an azure, and that into a grain colour ; and as those that work in wax cannot frame any new impression in it till the old be defaced, so the image of the prince of this world—the devil, must first be defaced, before the image of Christ can be formed in us : we must die before we can live.

“ THE END THEREOF ARE THE WAYS OF DEATH.”

PROV. xiv. 12.

Honey is very sweet and pleasant to the taste, but eaten overmuch is bitter in the stomach ; and the maker of it, the bee, hath a sting in her tail. Such are the delights and pleasures of the world ; therefore, saith Martial, an ancient bishop, *Quid ad nos delectatio mundi*, What have we to do with the delights of the world ? You may call it as you will, pleasure, pastime, mirth, joy, but in God’s dictionary it hath no such name, but is there called Adam’s goodly apple, which being eaten deprived them of Paradise—Esau’s red pottage, which being supped up bereaved him of his birth-right—Jonathan’s sweet honey, which being but tasted was like to cost him his life. It may delight thee for

a while, but it shall torment thee for ever. As any solid body, though it have never so fair a colour, as crimson, purple, azure, yet always the shadow is black ; so any earthly thing, though it have never so fair a show, yet always the shadow of it is black ; and the delight thou takest in it shall prove to be grievous in the end : there is bitterness in this sweet-ness, a sting in this bee. And therefore Philo calls the world “A sweet bitter thing.” Let us then account worldly delights not Naomi, but Mara, because it is nothing so much Naomi, sweet and pleasant at the first, as it is Mara and Amara, bitter and loathsome at the last.

“ BE YE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND.”—ROM. xii. 2.

An heavenly mind turns earth into heaven, like a bee that sucks honey out of supposed bitter herbs, and like unto fire that turns into fire that which is cast into it ; as the good stomach doth turn even grosser meats into good nourishment, whereas an ill stomach would turn the finest meats into bad juice.

“ MEN LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE EVIL.”—JOHN iii. 19.

Let a swarm remain at the place where it was hived a day or two, and then be removed to another standing, yet for two or three days after will they either sullenly keep in (except the weather

be very fair), or if they fly abroad and gather, repair with their labours to the first place, hankering and flying about it most part of the day, some not at all returning back to the hive, but desperately dying there, and the rest for many days lingering about their first mansion. And are there not many in the world, who, having stood in the way of sinners and sat in the chair of the scornful, cannot be moved or persuaded to alter their choice, but will do well (to be angry) to be evil? And if fear of hazard or hell or love of benefit allures and withdraws them from the public practice, yet shall they not from the inward liking and approbation, so that when he alters his standing gives over the practice of his sins, seems to be divorced from them, because he hath a station, an abiding elsewhere; in his open carriage somewhat altered, yet he flies about his former standing, his thoughts and imaginations feed all day long upon his lusts, he relisheth speculative wickednesses, so that when he hath withdrawn himself from his sin and given it over, he may have a month's mind after it, he may do with it still as the husband of Michal did when by a strong power she was taken from him, it would have hazarded his life to have refused, yet, saith the text, "He came weeping after her afar off;" he longed after her still, and loved her still. So a man may part with his sin in such a manner that still he goes weeping after it; he would have it again, he would fain enjoy it if it were not for

some greater danger or some greater trouble that he exposeth himself unto ; as you see in Phaltiel, it was not for want of love to his wife that he parted with her, but it was out of a desire he had to save himself, to escape the danger of the king's wrath, imprisonment, and death, that would have followed upon it.

“ THIS PEOPLE HONOURETH ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME.”—MARK vii. 6.

Bees are creatures fitted with natural instruments for the getting of honey : they have long tongues to draw it out of the sockets of the flowers, and they have nimble wings to carry them from place to place, that so what is not in one field may be found in another ; and they have quick sights to discern, but most active is their smell. And they have a little bottle within them to contain the honey when they have extracted it, and (which is more than all) delightful willingness to employ all these abilities for the compassing of this end, and the thriving in their labours by all the means and opportunities they have. But the fool hath a precious price in his hand, but knows not how to use it ; he lets slip many golden opportunities, letting them run like water besides the mill, driving no trade of knowledge with them, making no use of them for that purpose, and so soon loseth all the benefit of these means he hath. It is admirable to think how under the droppings of the pipe a man should be dry, how tha

under the continued means of grace a man may continue in deep ignorance; it is terrible, I say, to think this, while delicious manna, heavenly nectar, falls daily about our tents as it were, that if a man would vouchsafe to step out of his door and carry his omer in his hand, he might fill it every day. But if men will not vouchsafe the gathering of it, never make use of the means of grace that God offereth, but will be as childish and as foolish as those that go to the market; they go there for some business, but when the come there, (like fools) they go see this gay thing and the other gaudy thing, and so forget utterly their errand, and go home again without it; they come to God's house to see and to be seen, to prate with this party and gape on another, and so let us fall besides them, without minding what they hear or to know and remember it. They may have excellent means and yet thrive not, make no advantage of them; but he that will thrive and increase in knowledge must make precious account of the means, laying up something out of every opportunity that he hath.

“ MURDERERS SHALL HAVE THEIR PART IN THE LAKE WHICH BURNETH WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE.”—REV. xxi. 8.

There can be no habit of some sins, as in parricide, and in the wilful murder of ourselves. All their malignity is spent in one act, and the event is

best declared by one of them. The man dies in his sin, in that sin which excludes him from heaven. Every act of these sins is like the stinging of bees :

—Animamque in vulnere ponit.

He cannot strike again, he can sin that sin over no more, and therefore it is a single act that damns in that cause, unless he repent truly and effectually.

“ I KNOW THAT IN ME, (THAT IS IN MY FLESH,) DWELLETH NO GOOD THING ; FOR TO WILL IS PRESENT WITH ME, BUT HOW TO PERFORM THAT WHICH IS GOOD I FIND NOT.”—ROM. vii. 18.

Bees sting seldom when they conflict with insects, but when they contend with men or beasts they sting readily ; their rage is as high as their supposed enemies' power, so that it is evident (by an instinct of nature) they are not ignorant of their own danger, and yet to satisfy their spite, out of a bad custom, though natural, will undo themselves. Such is the violence of custom in sin, which is the law of sin, that by it a man is overruled against his will ; he cannot leave sin if he would. For as an old disease hath not only afflicted the part of its proper residence, and by its abode made continual diminution of his strength, but made a path also, and a channel for the humours to run thither, which by continual defluxion have digged an open passage, and prevailed beyond all the natural powers of resistance ;—so is an habitual vice—it

hath debauched the understanding, and made it to believe foolish things ; it hath abused the will and made it like a diseased appetite, in love with filthy things. It is like an evil stomach, that makes a man eat unwholesome meat against his reason. That's a sad calamity when a man sees what is good and yet cannot follow it, nay that he should desire it, and yet cannot lay hold upon it, for his faculties are bound in fetters, the habit hath taken away all those strengths of reason and religion by which it was hindered, and all the objections by which it was disturbed, and all that tenderness by which it was uneasy; and now the sin is chosen, and believed, and loved, it is pleasant and easy, usual and necessary. *Scibam ut esse me deceret, facere non quibam miser* : I knew well enough how I should comport myself, but I was so wretched that I could not do it.

“ THERE IS NO FAITHFULNESS IN THEIR MOUTH ; THEIR INWARD PART IS VERY WICKEDNESS ; THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN SEPULCHRE ; THEY FLATTER WITH THEIR TONGUE.”—PSALM v. 9.

Bees and wasps, though they sting not in the extremity of winter, nor when they are benumbed with cold, yet are full of poison, so that it is not want of desire to do mischief, nor yet want of malice, but only want of abilities. And there be sons of Belial that will fawn and humble themselves with a pretence of much affection, Joab-like, Art

in health, my brother? yet believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart: he waits but an opportunity or ability, and his sword shall be in thy fifth rib. They were not void of malice before, but only wanted power.

AS SORROWFUL, YET ALWAY REJOICING."

2 COR. vi. 10.

The bees' combs are perpendicular from the top of the hive to the bottom, and so they are very long, but yet they have a breadth likewise, the depth of the cells on either side, which yet holds no proportion with the length. The repletion of the cells with various fillings, some with bee-bread, some with honey, some with brood, some half full, others are empty, notes the variety of comforts and blessings which in this life men enjoy, but some more and some less. There are vicissitudes and changes in the life of a Christian, a diversity of dispositions and dispensations to which they are subject in this life. Sometimes, with the disciples on Mount Tabor, ravished with joy, and by and by, when the cloud overshadows them, they are afraid. When the Lord lets us feel his mercies we are alive, but if he hides his face and sets our sins in order before us, we are sore troubled; but ordinarily we dwell more in the valley of Baca than of Beracha; our mourning exceeds our mirth. The life therefore of a Christian may be compared to a web, so marvelously mixed and woven of comforts and troubles

by the hand of God, that the long threads thereof reaching from the day of our birth to the day of our death, are all of trouble, but the west interjected with manifold comforts.

“I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU.”

EZEK. xxxvi. 26.

Wax left to itself grows hard ; how much more the stony heart of man ? God not ruling and working in his heart it grows hard.

“HER END IS BITTER AS WORMWOOD.”

PROV. iv. 4.

Amnon had a strong lust to his sister Tamar, but when he had fulfilled it he hated her more than he loved her. So when we have fulfilled a lust we are not satisfied with it, but say to it, Arise, be-gone. As a bee having sucked something from one flower goes to another, and then to a third ; so we are soon weary of lusts—there is an emptiness in the creature—it is no way able to satisfy the desires of man’s heart, but they are soon weary, and therefore desire variety.

“PRIDE GOETH BEFORE DESTRUCTION, AND A HAUGHTY SPIRIT BEFORE A FALL.”—PROV. xvi. 18.

As humility, like the bee, gathers honey out of rank weeds, our very sins moving to repentance, so pride, like the spider, sucks poison out of the

fairest flowers, the best graces, and is corrupted with insolence.

“AN IDLE SOUL SHALL SUFFER HUNGER.”

PROV. xix. 15.

Bees are pains-taking creatures, but they enjoy not all their labours, but readily contribute out of their plenty, a portion to their keepers,—*Sic vos non vobis*,—still supplying their owners’ necessity out of their fruitful and useful store. And shall a man of more singular graces and faculties be idle, a burden to the world and himself? If happiness consisted in doing nothing, God, that meant Adam so happy, would never have set him about business, but as paradise was his storehouse, so also his workhouse; his pleasure was his task. There is no state of man that can privilege a folded hand—our life is *vita pulveris, non pulvinaris*. Hands, means, and moneys, men make the protection of idleness, when as Adam commanded the whole earth, yet work expected him.

“THE WICKED PLOTTETH AGAINST THE JUST.”

PSALM xxxvii. 12.

Robbing bees of divers hives will join hands, and league together without jarring or discord, though at another time their hostility is continual, their feud implacable, their difference is irreconcilable. Nay, wasps also, though there be a natural antipathy between them, yet to do a mischief to a

neighbour hive will comply and unite together with them. There is a combination of the ungodly even so far as to the very participation of their estates ; “ Cast in thy lot with us, we will all have one purse.” They are entangled in mutual amity : like beds of eels, nothing but thunder can break their knots. “ Is it much,” saith Christ, “ that you love them that love you ?” Robbing bees and wasps do it ; even publicans do the same.

“ A MAN’S FOES ARE THEY OF HIS OWN HOUSE-HOLD.”—MAT. x. 36.

Bees are often suffocated and drowned in their own honey, that which with industry and labour they had gathered, the combs being melted with the heat of the sun, or casually broken. And the sins of many, which they had wearied themselves to act, often prove their ruin and destruction. Sodom might have stood for all the five kings that bade her battle, if the unnatural fire of lust had not drawn down upon her unnatural fire—I mean the fire of hell, as Salvian speaketh ; from heaven it was not. It was not Titus’ siege without, but the zealots’ sedition within the walls that dispeopled Jerusalem, strewing her streets with dead carcases, and dyeing her common sewers with blood. It was not the Assyrian horse and chariots, but Jeroboam’s golden calves, together with their sorceries, witchcrafts, and other sins unrepented of, which destroyed Israel. The enemies of a man, saith our Saviour,

“ are those of his own house.” Plaucus Plautius, hiding himself in the time of the proscription, was found out only by the smell of his sweet oils, where-with he used luxuriously to anoint himself.

“ THE LORD SHALL BRING FORTH THY JUDGMENT AS THE NOONDAY.”—PSALM xxxvii. 6.

Bees, as almost all other insects, are in their first estate and condition very rude and imperfect creatures; they have none of the senses except feeling and tasting, they only eat to live, and live to eat, and again after a time they neither eat nor live, but die to live; but as soon as they have transmuted their shape they come forth goodly and beautiful creatures. In the valley of tears it is not perfect day, no, not with the best Christian under heaven, but it grows by degrees till it be perfect day with them, which is at the day of their dissolution. Like to the earthen pitchers of Gideon’s men, when they brake their pitchers the lamps gloriously shone forth and dazzled their eyes,—thus it is with a Christian; when these earthen pitchers and carcases are broken, his light will shine forth gloriously: in the mean time we have light, we have lamps, but they are pitchers shining very dimly.

“ IT IS SOWN IN DISHONOUR; IT IS RAISED IN GLORY.”—1 COR. xvi. 43.

The first death or transmutation of the bees is their profit and advantages, their excellency and

glory; they die, but yet to live more nobly. And death to the godly is not the death of the man, but the death of sin in the man: *Mors est sepultura vitiorum.* As the worm which is bred in the tree, saith Chrysostom, doth at last consume it, so death, which is brought out by sin, doth at length consume and destroy sin in the children of God.

“ PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD.”

2 COR. vii. 1.

The mother wasps and hornets, after they have wrought awhile and procreated their kind, give our labouring, and are maintained by the industry and piety of their offspring. But bees never sue out a *quietus est* when they are old, to discharge them from their labours; but as they are best acquainted by experience what flowers are most advantageous and profitable, so are they more willing and able by practice to undergo the honey-gathering labour: thus doth exercise increase strength and diligence. Hypocrites with Jehu may drive on awhile furiously, with Joash may hold out a great while, but at last they will give in and be weary: but let a believer exercise himself in grace, and he will grow up in the Lord, and increase in spiritual strength. A tree, the more holdfast it hath with its root in the earth, the more fruit it brings forth. They that walk daily in a Christian course increase strength, they walk from strength to strength, till they meet their God in Sion.

“ GOD SAID TO JONAH, DOEST THOU WELL TO BE ANGRY FOR THE GOURD ? ” — JONAH iv. 9.

The honey in Samson’s lion is very fitly likened to the profit of afflictions. The assaults of affliction may be terrible, like Samson’s lion, but they yield much sweetness to those that dare encounter and overcome them, who know how to overlive the witherings of their gourds without discontent or peevishness, while they may yet converse with God.

“ EVERY MOVING THING THAT LIVETH, SHALL BE MEAT FOR YOU.” — GEN. ix. 3.

Nothing is created for itself, but so placed by the most wise providence, that it may confer somewhat to the public good. The poorest creature yields some good wherein it doth imitate the goodness of the Maker; every thing is enabled with some gift for the universal benefit. Kine give us their milk, sheep their wool, bees their honey and wax; every one pays a tribute to man, their usufructuary lord.

“ GOD MADE EVERY THING THAT CREEPETH UPON THE EARTH AFTER HIS KIND: AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.” — GEN. i. 25.

God’s power was no less in creating a little bee than a great lion. As the clock-maker’s skill is seen in a little watch as in a great clock, so God’s goodness is in the smallest and most ordinary matters, as in the greatest and most extraordinary.

“ LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT.”—HEB. xii. 1.

Bees smelling a field of coleseed, though a mile remote from their hives, will directly fly thither, tempted with no other blossoms by the way, though much nearer; see them perhaps they may as they fly, but will not be diverted or withdrawn by them. And so many things are to be observed in our course in this world with our eye, which are not to be entertained into our delights and affections.

“ YE HAVE NOT YET RESISTED UNTO BLOOD,
STRIVING AGAINST SIN.”—HEB. xii. 4.

Bees, while they are numerous and full, endure without regret or discontent the royal issue, but when by the emission of two or three colonies they find their numbers greatly impaired, their strength much weakened, then without delay they do either destroy or chase them out of their hives. Believers, while they are in a natural estate, easily admitted the fellowship of any lust, were not much troubled nor vexed with Satan’s wiles. But as soon as their enlightened eyes begin to see and discern their misery and danger from them, they labour to kill and mortify, to subdue and crucify every sinful passion, and all the hellish brood of lust.

“ GREAT AND MARVELLOUS ARE THY WORKS, LORD
GOD ALMIGHTY.”—REV. xv. 3.

Solomon, the wisest among the sons of men, saith,

“ Go to the ant, thou sluggard ; consider her ways, and be wise. So thou shalt learn providence, in a fair day to provide a cloak for the tempest, in peace to foresee war, and in youth to lay up somewhat for old age. And mayest thou learn so much from the ant ? And when thou walkest into thy garden and beholdest the industrious bee, which with unwearyed diligence fetcheth her food from afar, and that (not as the ant) for her alone behoof and supply, but for the necessities and superfluities also of the sons of men ; nay, dost thou behold their admirable government, chaste procreation, motherly affections to their issue, stout defence of their hives and houses, with many other occurring passages from their birth to their death,—and canst thou learn nothing ? Surely if thou (whosoever thou art) seriously meditates on the particulars herein exhibited, thou canst not but acknowledge that God is *maximus in minimis*.

“ FAITHFUL ARE THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND.”

PROV. xxvii. 6.

As a true friend is the sweetest contentment in the world, so in his qualities he well resembleth honey, the sweetest of all liquors. Nothing is more sweet to the taste, nothing more sharp and cleansing when it meets with an exulcerate sore. For myself I know I must have faults, and therefore I care not for that friend that I shall never smart by. For

my friends, I know they cannot be faultless, and therefore as they shall find me sweet in their praises and encouragements, so sharp also in their censure. Either let them abide me no friend to their faults, or no friend to themselves.

“ THE GOODNESS OF GOD LEADETH TO REPENT-
ANCE.”—ROM. ii. 4.

An evil man is clay to God, wax to the devil. God may stamp him into powder or temper him anew, but none of his means can melt him. Contrariwise, a good man is God’s wax, and Satan’s clay: he relents at every look of God, but is not stirred at any temptation. I had rather bow than break to God; but for Satan or the world, I had rather be broken in pieces by their violence, than suffer myself to be bowed unto their obedience.

“ BE YE ALSO READY, FOR IN SUCH AN HOUR
AS YE THINK NOT, THE SON OF MAN COMETH.”
MAT. xxiv. 49.

Bees observe a martial posture in all their carriages; some keep guard at the gates, others like scouts watch at a remoter distance, some within the hive, as soldiers in garrison, observe who goes in and out. So though that many follow their labours at home and abroad, yet others are warlike employed, lest they should suffer from an unknown or unsuspected adversary, for want of foresight and preparation. Thus Iphicrates, an Athenian general,

encamped in time of peace, and among his friends, yet still intrenched his army, ordered his outworks, set his watch, kept his *corps-du-garde*, laid out his sentinels, and in a word, observed all martial discipline, as if he had been in the heat and height of war ; and being asked by one of his familiars what he feared, he answered, To be surprised : and lest it should fall out that he should be constrained to say, I thought not on it. Oh that believers were thus wise to think of their latter end, and always to mind when the appointed time of their change shall come ! then would they be always prepared to entertain death, either secretly or openly. Jesus Christ, our grand Captain, who valiantly triumphed over it, often inculcates this watchfulness upon his disciples and apostles, and in them on all believers. “ Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” And elsewhere, “ What I say unto you, I say unto all—watch.” The Sybarites, which were not enlightened with such a sun, yet always observed this custom in their banquets,—to have a death’s head delivered from hand to hand by all the guests at the table, to the end to admonish them not to be transported with intemperance, and to cause them to remember, that as they were nourished of the flesh of dead creatures, that they lived in dying, and died in living. And the Egyptians, for the same reason, carried in their processions a vessel of gold full of earth, which was as if a herald should proclaim to

all the assembly in the words of the prophet, “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!”

“ THOU SHALT DASH THEM IN PIECES LIKE A POTTER’S VESSEL.”—PSALM ii. 9.

The enemies of the church are compared to bees. Fear not their multitude nor their rage : they are bees, not lions. They buzz, they make a noise, they have stings, but they cannot do what they would : their power is less than their spite and malice, and they hurt not but with their own certain death and destruction. Believe then God in the midst of their machinations, and applaud thyself in their tumultuous projects, that all shall be frustrate and abortive. *Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt.* When God pleaseth, he can but blow on self-conceited Nimrods, mighty hunters, oppressing and tyrannical enemies, and easily overthrow them and crush them to the earth, and break in pieces all their counsels. If Pharaoh vex God’s people, asking, Who is the Lord ? flies, lice, and caterpillars shall be his challengers and conquerors, and ask, Who is Pharaoh ?

“ BEHOLD ! A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL.”
—ISA. vii. 14.

Honey was an usual food for little children among the Jews ; wherefore Isaiah saith of Christ, “ Butter

and honey shall he eat." By honey, some say was designed the divinity of his birth, and by butter, his humanity; but foolishly, and besides the mind of the prophet, whose words are clear, and the sense open. As if he had said, Immanuel shall not only be a true God, but also a true man; that is, he shall feed of such meats as your children use to eat of, so that his education shall be common and ordinary, for fat and sweet meats are usually provided for infants, and especially honey among the eastern people. So that by these words, synecdochically at least, is noted that his conception shall be miraculous, but not his education. The prophet subjoins that there should be found in him progress or proficiency like unto other infants, till he was grown to ripeness of years, for then he should be endowed with an excellent judgment not only to distinguish good and evil, but to choose the good and refuse the evil. The complement of all which is found, Luke ii. 52. Phil. ii. 7. To be equal with God on one side and on the other, that he humbled himself. All which the prophet would here have noted, although in somewhat obscure words, with respect to the times and prophetical style. Whence it is also evident that they do altogether wrest the words of the prophet that insert to that, and take it finally, as if the child should therefore eat honey and butter, that he might know to refuse the evil and choose the good. In a word, Christ is said to eat the butter and honey; that is,

to be frugally educated with such means as were naturally afforded, for there was nothing more common among the Jews than butter, for most of them kept cattle. And as plentiful was honey, which their woods and forests did sufficiently furnish them withal.

“THE RICH MAN SHALL LIE DOWN, BUT HE SHALL NOT BE GATHERED: HE OPENETH HIS EYES, AND HE IS NOT.”—JOB xxvii. 19.

Figuratively, the sudden and unavoidable destruction of the wicked is often in Scripture expressed by the melting of wax. In some places it is spoken of the mountains, to set forth God's power and majesty. First, learn hence that God doth arm himself as it were in the defence of his people, but not as men are wont to do, because he is furnished with so great power, that with a nod he can confound his adversaries. Although therefore, sometimes he seems to dissemble, or not to take notice of their danger, yet will he in due time appear in their behalf, nor needs he much preparation for their overthrow, for the mountains melt like wax before him, much more shall crawling worms. Secondly, let us be humbled before the powerful hand of God, and acknowledge our frailty, for we are an evaporating smoke, a vanishing shadow, a melting wax. And if we have any stability, let us acknowledge that we have it from God,

who alone confirms, defends, and preserves us, who otherwise would quickly come to nothing, who were at first made of nothing, and have our present support and subsistence in our God alone.

“HE THAT GATHERETH IN SUMMER IS A WISE SON.”—PROV. x. 5.

Bees are industrious in their season, for they well know that the neglect of it is their irrecoverable overthrow and destruction. And this life is the summer and harvest wherein we must labour and watch against temptations. The death-bed or dying hour is a sharp combat, unless we have gathered into the hives of our souls the graces of faith and love, &c., whereby we may live after death, and expect a certain recompense. He which doth not this shall experimentally find in his winter the darkness of his mind, the clouds of fear, the wind and frost of judgment. The bees draw out of the cells the old and stinking bee-bread, so must we in our lives mortify unprofitable and sinful lusts, whence great sins may arise and be fomented. The bee being weak with long shutting up in the winter, on the first opportunity of a sun-shiny day, renews her strength by coming forth, and flying abroad in the heat thereof. And we must learn to raise up our dull and drowsy spirits by the word of the Sun of righteousness. Let us therefore diligently bestir ourselves in the summer and fair weather of the means, whilst Christ, the Sun of grace, shineth,

while God and his ministers call upon us, otherwise another day many with Esau shall seek repentance with tears, and shall not find it.

“BE NOT OVERCOME OF EVIL, BUT OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.”—ROM. xii. 2.

The queen commandant hath a sting, but useth it not for revenge ; she rules not by written, but by nature’s laws, teaching that they must be slow to punish who are exalted to the highest powers ; and whatsoever bee follows not the queen’s example, presently repents of her temerity ; for she no sooner stings but pays the price of it with her life. Let Christians hear and learn, who have a command “not to render evil for evil, but to overcome evil with goodness.”

“GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.”

1 TIM. iii. 16.

To find honey, is to taste the sweetness of a holy understanding, which then is sufficiently eaten when our understanding is kept under government or moderation, according to the measure of our sense ; for he is satiated with honey and vomits it, who desires to dive into things he cannot conceive, and so loseth that whereby he might be nourished, and therefore weak understandings ought not to search into mysteries above their capacity and comprehension.

“I HAVE LEARNED BY EXPERIENCE.”—GEN. xxx. 27.

We may read the writings of poets and philosophers, but yet wisely to cull out of them whatsoever is profitable, as also with a discerning judgment to avoid whatsoever is hurtful, and so imitate the witty bees, who, whatsoever flower they gather of, following nature as their guide, with a singular wisdom suck out only that which is profitable.

“ ALL THESE THINGS ARE DONE IN PARABLES.”

MARK iv. 11.

The doctrine of wisdom is by Solomon compared to honey and the honey-comb, because that as honey sweetens meats, so the word all other learning ; but yet there is this difference in the signification of both, for honey, because it is already prepared to eat, signifies the mere superficies of the letter, but the honey-comb, where the honey is not expressed from the wax, doth figuratively point forth the allegorical signification, that, the veil of the letter being withdrawn, the sweetness of the spiritual sense, but with some delay and labour, may be perceived.

“ THOU CANST NOT SEE MY FACE, FOR THERE SHALL NO MAN SEE MY FACE AND LIVE.”—EXODUS xxxiii. 20.

Honey too liberally eaten kills ; so the searching after the knowledge of the divinity is sweet, but he which desires to search further than the nature of

man is capable, his glory will oppress and crush him; for as honey taken immoderately bursts the eater, so this inquiry the understanding that cannot comprehend it. Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith and vomit it. Hast thou found the sweetness of the understanding of heavenly things, which is afforded and made known by the pains and labours of the spiritual fathers? As prudent bees, take heed thou desirest not to know more than thou oughtest to know (be wise unto sobriety) lest whilst thou seekest to understand the highest wisdom beyond thy abilities, thou losest the knowledge of that which thou didst thoroughly understand.

“EVERY WORD OF GOD IS PURE.”—PROV. XXX. 5.

The wise bee gathers sweet and wholesome nourishment from those places and flowers which a vulgar judgment deems worthless and good for nothing; and a wise Christian from those passages of the Scriptures where the word seems carnal, discerns spiritual excellencies. For as an unskilful man coming into a field abounding with wholesome herbs, passeth by all as of no more use than grass,—but a skilful botanist doth otherwise;—so doth a spiritual reader find spiritual advantage from every sentence. To the pure, all things are profitable and pure, and if any place seems uncomely, it is only to those that are such in themselves.

“SATAN PROVOKED DAVID TO NUMBER ISRAEL.”
1 CHRON. xxi. 1.

Mice are very hurtful to bees, but not at all times alike. In summer, when the hives are full, and the bees lusty and keep a constant guard and watch, they seldom meddle with them ; but in the winter, when they are benumbed with cold, shut into the hives, and almost bereaved of their lives, then do they without fear or hazard rob and plunder them. And Satan, our constant adversary, takes advantage of professors : when they keep a continual watch and course in prayer, they do not so oft miscarry, but in the night of their ignorance, in the sleep of their peace and security, when they can least espy him, doth he take advantage, and by his wily, unseen stratagems, overthrow many.

“THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS SOWN IN PEACE OF THEM THAT MAKE PEACE.”—JAMES iii. 18.

The seeds of discord were scattered in every furrow of the creation, and came up in a numberless variety of antipathies. Bees are a prey to the titmouse, often a morsel to the spider. Their habitations are digged through and plundered by mice, and many other enemies have they whereby they daily suffer ; yet no contest and hostility is so destructive and dangerous, as that which exercised

with bees, creatures of their own kind. What is this but an image of that woeful hostility which is exercised between us reasonable creatures, who are conjoined in one common humanity, if not religion ? We fight with, and destroy each other, more than those creatures that want reason to temper their passions. No beast is so cruel to man as himself : where one man is slain by a beast, ten thousand are slain by man. What is that war which we study and practise but the art of killing ? Whatever Turks and pagans may do, O Lord, how long shall this brutish fury arm Christians against each other ? Whilst even devils are not at enmity with themselves, but accord in wickedness, why do we men so mortally oppose each other ? O Thou that art the God of peace, compose the unquiet hearts of men to a happy and universal concord, and at last refresh our souls with the multitude of peace !

NOW UNTO THE KING ETERNAL, IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE,
THE ONLY WISE GOD, BE HONOUR AND GLORY FOR
EVER AND EVER. *Amen.*

